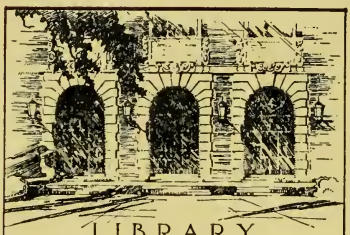

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ROMANCE

OF

THE PYRENEES.

IN

FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

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ROMANCE

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CHAP. I.

WHILE all this important business was transacting, the duca di Manfredonia, with conte Elfridii, returned from Tuscany. They had learned by the duchessa's letters a full account of the fascinating fugitives, and came back to Naples on the wings of impatience to behold them.

Her exertions for personal safety had for a while suspended the grief of Viola, but not subdued it; and the moment she gained a place of refuge she sunk under the weight of her sorrows, which seemed to press more heavily upon her heart from the short re-

spite she had from them; and for several weeks after she reached Naples she was too ill to leave her chamber.

Clementina felt severely the losses she had so recently sustained: but she had not now the death of both her parents to deplore, nor to mix with her sorrow the dreadful idea of being the cause, though the innocent one, of the murder of her father and her uncle: she therefore more speedily recovered from her grief, and was seen by the duca and his friend some time before Viola could appear to them.

The duca di Manfredonia was charmed almost to fascination by the beauty, wit, and manners of Clementina; but still he felt impatient to behold that phænomenon, 'a girl not yet seventeen, who could encounter difficulties and dangers in the most formidable shape, to fly from a lover, young, beautiful, seducing, and his country's hero, merely because he was a profligate.' At length he saw Viola in all that interesting languor her sorrows threw around her; he saw her move in the perfection of graceful dignity; he heard her bewitching voice, her

fascinating conversation, given in words of simple eloquence, spoken

> "So softly, that, like flakes of feather'd snow,
> They melted as they fell;" DRYDEN.

he saw her, heard her, loved her, and despaired.

Lorenzo di Manfredonia was perhaps not so strikingly handsome as Don Ambrosio di Montalvan, but he was more interestingly so: the expression of his countenance pourtrayed more sentiment, more sense and sweetness, than Ambrosio's, and spoke more to the heart than to the fancy: his figure was faultless symmetry and grace; his disposition, his temper, his heart, his talents, were the perfection of human nature. Yet he doubted his own powers of gaining the affections of the fascinating marchesa: depreciating his own merits, he thought it would be presumptuous in him to aspire to her, whom he considered the perfection of every beauty, every virtue under heaven; and the disparity of their years, he believed, independent of every other barrier, would prove an insurmountable one, since Clementina's 'quite old man' was then in his thirty-fourth year.

But to rescue Clementina from the odium of absurdity, we must remind our readers, that it was natural for a girl not quite sixteen to consider a person more than double her own age as very old; and the duca thought Viola would look upon him as much too old to appear in the character of her lover. But with all his sense and penetration he was here mistaken; for, after two months passed constantly in his society, it became the first wish of Viola's heart. They neither now knew happiness but in each other's conversation, every passing moment discovering to one, some before undiscovered mental treasure, in the other's possession: they felt existence only in each other's society: and yet the duca's attachment remained as perfect a secret to the marchesa as her predilection was to him, until accident revealed the long-hidden source of many a sigh and blush, of all that pensive, restless sadness, that tinged the cheeks and heaved the bosom of Viola, and strongly marked the manners of Lorenzo.

The marchesa of Palermo was only to be seen to be admired. Many suitors appeared,

all of whom she instantly rejected; and after each of these rejections the duchessa strongly urged Lorenzo to try his fortune: but still doubting the probability of his success, he feared, by avowing his passion, to make Viola's residence with his grandmother unpleasant to her. At length the blind urchin, weary of concealment, called in Flora to assist him. From Viola's earliest days the perfume of the tuberose had been too powerful for her nerves. Lorenzo, not knowing this, one day presented her with a beautiful branch he had just gathered. They were the gift of Lorenzo: she placed them in her bosom, and in a few moments after fell senseless on the couch upon which she had been sitting. The duca, all terror, agony, dismay, summoned assistance: the room was instantly ventilated, and all specifics tried. Viola was just recovering—Lorenzo hanging over her in almost distracted anxious tenderness—when Clementina, drawn thither by an account of her cousin's illness, rushed in, and, at one glance developing the cause of this sudden indisposition, grasped at the tuberoses, exclaiming,

" These odious flowers have made her ill."

This sentence roused at once the scarcely recovered Viola—" Oh ! leave my flowers," she cried: " I would not part with them for worlds."

" Not for worlds?" exclaimed the amazed Clementina. " From your earliest days I have known you fly from the scent of a tuberose, as you would from contagion: what can have made these so precious to you?"

The question, the inquiring eye, of Clementina awakened the consciousness of Viola: her voice, her look, her burning blushes, as she strove in vain to account for this sudden fondness for what she had ever before shunned, conveyed to the throbbing heart of Lorenzo the most joyful tidings it had ever known. Ardently he now entered the lists, with many competitors, for her favour, and upon the day she completed her seventeenth year the marchesa of Palermo was united to the duca di Manfredonia.

Conte Elfridii was one of those indigent nobles who swarm in Naples, and who by

his uncommonly great talents, and insinuating manners, gained the friendship of Lorenzo, who had been of considerable service to him in pecuniary arrangements, and upon every occasion in which he could evince his regard. The conte was one of those common characters so frequently to be found in great men's houses — specious, artful, watchful of his own interest, and sedulous to conceal all his imperfections from those he wished to please, or to deceive; and he was so entertaining a companion, so polished, so learned, so apparently amiable, that he stood high in the estimation of the duca and his grandmother, neither of whom entertained the slightest suspicion to his disadvantage.

The beauty, genius, and playful gaiety of Clementina made a deep impression upon the heart of the insidious Elfridii, whose person was good and face rather handsome: but he feared a repulse, as he was by four years Lorenzo's senior in age, who had dreaded so much from the disproportion of years between his Viola and himself; and above all, Clementina had no fortune. He therefore concealed his attachment within

his own breast until he saw the marchesa, Clementina's equal in youth, beauty, and accomplishments, her superior in mental endowments, in rank and fortune, bestow herself upon a man double her own age, and that a very noble provision had been made by Viola for her beloved cousin. Then the wary Elfridii commenced his suit. Clementina laughed at his passion, caricatured himself, and then showed him all the ridiculous forms her lively imagination had pourtrayed him in. Despairing to succeed with her, he applied to the young duchessa, to exert her influence with her cousin in his favour. But Viola possessed too much delicacy of mind to interfere where she knew gratitude would sacrifice every thing to her wishes. Besides, Elfridii was no favourite of hers. Although, as her Lorenzo's friend, she treated him with the utmost respect and deference, yet for worlds she would not see him the husband of her beloved Clementina.

Disappointed in his success with Viola, Elfridii applied to her husband. But all Lorenzo's interest with Clementina was before

engaged by another friend, Altidore (conte Ariosto's only son), who had come from Tuscany to attend the nuptials of Lorenzo; and the vindictive Elfridii, incensed at the duca and duchessa not espousing his cause, and compelling Clementina to be his, resolved to avenge his bitter disappointment upon them.

Altidore di Modena was then in his twenty-fourth year, uncommonly handsome, sensible, learned, amiable, and with manners highly refined and captivating. By intermarriages the families of Manfredonia and Ariosto were connected, and by a long formed and almost hereditary friendship they lived in habits of intimacy in despite of distance. While Lorenzo was yet a youth, and Altidore a child, a strong attachment commenced between them; and when Lorenzo arrived at manhood, and was the admiration of all who saw him, the idol of all who knew him, he became the model from which the young Altidore formed himself. To be thought in any respect like his friend was the highest gratification of his heart,

and to equal him in perfection the height of his ambition; and even had Clementina Stanhope possessed fewer captivating attractions, she would have been the choice of Altidore, because she resembled the wife of Lorenzo.

Altidore's mother had died just before Viola took refuge in Naples, and it was a visit of condolence to Altidore which caused the duca's absence at that period. Grief for his deceased parent prevented Altidore from visiting Naples until the nuptials of Lorenzo, when the beautiful Clementina captivated his fancy and won his heart. He was not doomed to sigh in hopelessness: the attachment was mutual, the consent of conte Ariosto readily obtained; and the moment Elfridii found his rival was accepted he quitted Naples, full of vindictive ire. The day preceding the marriage he returned, apparently calm, and reconciled to his bitter disappointment: but it was the dreadful calm and reconciliation that meditated revenge inspired. He attended the nuptials; and when kneeling at the altar, whilst the

marriage benediction was pronouncing, he solemnly pledged himself to vengeance by blasting the happiness of his friend and Viola, whom he accused as the destroyers of his peace.

CHAP. II.

Soon after the union of Altidore and Clementina, they were called into Tuscany to receive the last blessing of the dying conte Ariosto; and in some time after their departure the happiness of the duca and duchessa di Manfredonia was considerably augmented by the birth of a lovely boy, whom they named Orlando. The dowager duchessa was enraptured at beholding and clasping a great-grandchild in her arms: but she did not long survive this happy event; she lived respected to a fine old age, and was lamented in death by all who had felt the influence of her virtues. Her grandson and his amiable Viola were sincere mourners: her death was the first blow their connubial felicity received: they felt it deeply, and the sorrow it occasioned seemed tinctured with sad presages of the future misery of their lives. They quitted Naples almost imme-

diately, where every scene so forcibly reminded them of the parent they deplored, and removed to the castle of Manfredonia; where we now will leave them for a time to their grief for their excellent grandmother, to caress their fascinating child, and to enjoy that short period of connubial happiness the wicked allowed them to experience, and introduce our readers to some new characters.

Alphonso conte Ariosto, father to Altidore, had in his juvenile days committed many indiscretions, and not the least among them was marrying, unknown to his family, a beautiful plebeian girl, who possessed more art than virtues, whilst she had the address to make the reverse appear to every superficial observer. Soon after the infatuation of the moment was past, the character of Aurora unfolded itself to the repentant and dismayed Alphonso. He shuddered at the unfortunate step he had taken and, notwithstanding the violence, arts, and ambition of Aurora, contrived to keep his marriage secret during his father's life; in consequence of which, the only offspring of this fatal marriage was left to the care of Aurora

in its early childhood, and Elvira di Modena learned her first lessons in the school of art, dissimulation, and every evil. When Elvira had attained her fifth year, her licentious mother was called to that rank and consequence she panted for, by the death of the old conte, and for two years disgraced the title of Ariosto by the most reprehensible conduct, and died in her twenty-seventh year, a martyr to her own profligacy. Her then cicisbeo, in a fit of jealousy, by poison rid the world and conte Ariosto of a worthless woman.

Elvira was too exact an epitome of her mother, in person and disposition, to be dear to her father's heart. He trembled for the vicious bent of her inclinations, and, with a hope of amending them, injudiciously sent her from him, for her education, to one of the most austere convents in France, the rigid rules of which nurtured the seeds of evil already sown in her mind. To deceive her severe guardians she now each moment believed necessary; and while her understanding was highly cultivating, her heart's vices increased and multiplied: and when

recalled to Palino, at the desire of Isabella, her father's second wife, she appeared with beauty of face and figure dazzling to behold, with manners soft, elegant, and seductive, and wearing the semblance of every virtue; for art had encompassed her heart with its most impenetrable veil, to hide from every eye the unhallowed shrine of vice. The amiable Isabella idolized her, her young brother adored her; while her father, charmed and astonished, felt reproach within himself for his former unkindness, and strove, by affectionate indulgence, to wipe away all recollection of the past. But Elvira's was that direful mischief which loves to feed on the remembrance of injuries past, and even when smiling to brood on vengeance: her father was her abhorrence, and her mother's detestation of him with her own were twined together in her heart's core by the dæmons of hatred and revenge.

The second marriage of conte Ariosto had taken place in about a year after the death of Aurora; and as he had chosen his first wife from amongst the dregs of the people, he soared to an opposite extreme,

and selected his second from the descent of princes, one of the highest families of the Spanish hidalgos, not more pre-eminent for its uncontaminated blood than for its spotless honour. Isabella was one of the most lovely scions of this ancient tree. In making the continental tour, after the death of Aurora, Alphonso saw her at the Spanish court, was fascinated, and became a successful wooer. One child only sprung from this auspicious union, Altidore, the father of our heroine, the patron of Diego, whose simple story bore testimony to his early worth.

About the period Elvira was recalled from France, conte Ariosto became guardian to Polydore conte Vicenza, a youth of uncommon beauty, talents, and every captivating grace; but in depravity of heart only could he be equalled by Elvira. A congeniality of sentiment soon drew their kindred hearts to each other. But Polydore's fortune was small, and Elvira's depended solely upon her father's pleasure; and ambition pointed out other paths to them than love and poverty.

The duca di Manfredonia was the rich

prize Elvira resolved to gain: but he beheld her with indifference, and resisted all her blandishments, even when she appeared in the alluring form of well-acted sorrow upon the death of Isabella; and shortly after, his marriage with Viola cut off all her hopes for a short time. Notwithstanding this attempt upon the heart of Lorenzo, Elvira's attachment to Polydore remained unconquerable; and in an unguarded moment she fell a victim to her own depravity and the treachery of conte Vicenza, who had, a few years prior to this period, emancipated from the guardianship of her father, and squandered at the gaming-table and in other licentiousness, the little fortune his faithful guardian had carefully augmented for him.

Ever anxious for the world's favourable opinion, Elvira, too late, began to tremble for the consequences of her own conduct, and, silencing every argument of ambition within her breast, condescended to solicit an immediate union with conte Vicenza. Her artful blandishments, co-operating with his fears of conte Ariosto, led

him on to demand Elvira in marriage; when her father, indignant at Polydore's dissipated conduct, to which he was no stranger, refused his consent, and in the most determined manner commanded his daughter to give up every idea of an union with conte Vicenza.

This was the dreadful signal for Elvira's long premeditated vengeance. Her father was almost immediately taken ill of a lingering illness, that baffled the skill of the faculty, and which terminated his existence very shortly after the marriage of his son. He breathed his last sigh in the arms of his daughter, whose exemplary care and filial tenderness to her father, during his illness, were the admiration of all Tuscany. She scarcely ever left his chamber from the moment he was confined to it; administered all his medicines and nourishment herself; and her affliction upon his decease was so violent, that she was reduced by it to her bed, where she was confined for some weeks, refusing all medicinal advice. To rouse her from this unavailing sorrow, her affectionate unsuspecting brother, himself a

prey to real grief, advised a change of scene; and as soon as she was able to undertake the journey, his Clementina consigned her to the care of the ill-fated Viola, immediately after the birth of Orlando.

But before we proceed with our narrative, we must execute the horrid task of completely withdrawing the black veil from Elvira's heart, and showing to our shuddering reader a monster, from whom dismayed nature recoils. Elvira was the murderer of her father. She had administered to him a small portion of a slow but subtile poison, which at first brought on slight symptoms of illness, so slight that it was not deemed necessary to recall his son from Naples, whither he was just then gone to be united to Clementina; and Elvira having assumed the character of chief nurse, she had opportunities of infusing more of this deadly drug in his food, to increase his illness by imperceptible degrees as her plan called for it. And her diabolical purpose was at length effected, without any danger of detection; as for many reasons, affecting to be influenced by that hope which true af-

fection scarcely ever relinquishes, she pretended to disbelieve all idea of her father's danger, and would not summon her brother until almost too late, under the specious pretence of wishing to spare her dear Altidore an unnecessary pang, since she felt, like a supernatural inspiration, a thorough conviction of her adored parent's perfect recovery. And when he breathed his last, blessing his children, the phrensy of despair seemed to take possession of this arch fiend: she clung to the corse of a parent her own hand had deprived of life, and in the most distracted manner lamented his death; accusing the physicians, by their ignorance, as the cause of his not recovering; and in a frantic tone commanded them to open the body, to inform his heart-broken children what fatal malady had deprived them of their estimable parent.

But this command the wily parricide knew full well could not be obeyed, as her father had given the most solemn injunctions to his son never to allow his body to be opened: and in his will he further enforced this request, which was occasioned by his adored

Isabella having visited an hospital in Florence of which she was the patroness; and going by mistake into a room where an operation of that kind was performing, by the fatal mistake she caught a fever, which it was believed had caused her death; while, in fact, the diabolical Elvira it was who in all probability deprived the world of one of its brightest ornaments; for in this case, to court her darling popularity, she, in defiance of the danger of infection, attended her amiable mother in-law herself; when it struck her infernal heart that the fellest blow she could inflict upon her father would be the depriving him of his adored wife. Every medicine therefore that was prescribed, she would suffer none to administer but herself; and as the devoted Isabella was delirious, she feared nothing from her detection: and she artfully substituted any milk and water mixture that suited her purpose, to appear like the drugs which she destroyed; by which means the fever, unchecked, hourly augmented, and she had the diabolical transport of beholding her

parent's misery upon the loss of his adored Isabella.

The exertions Elvira thought it necessary to make, to evince her affliction for the death of her father, accelerated the birth of her child. She retired to her chamber under the veil of sorrow overpowering her; and shortly after her puny boy was conveyed by Bianca, her attendant and devoted creature, out of the castle, under the auspices of father Georgio, Elvira's lenient confessor, who only heard what she thought necessary to communicate, and was upon this occasion made her confidant and adviser; and after being named Theodore, the poor babe was sent by a creature of Georgio's to the care of a sister of his who lived in Languedoc. By the care of the crafty Bianca, Elvira soon recovered, and was enabled to take the unfortunate journey to Naples, her head and heart projecting new mischiefs: for her father had left her too small a portion to gratify Polydore's avarice; and although her generous brother doubled that fortune, it was insufficient for the rapacious Vicenza,

whom now, for the sake of her child, Elvira resolved by some means, no matter how iniquitous, to make her husband. Altidore, not in the least aware of the strength or cause of his sister's attachment, advised her to think no more of a man who possessed so little affection for her, which his caviling about fortune he thought too plainly evinced.

And now, courteous reader, we must leave the wily Elvira at the castle of Manfredonia, whither she accompanied the duca and duchessa, stealing, like the insidious serpent, into the unsuspicious Viola's warmest esteem; while we return to Don Ambrosio, whom we left, almost two years prior to the period we have just been speaking of, at a fisherman's hut upon the coast of Sicily.

CHAP. III.

NOTHING could equal the consternation and dismay of Don Ambrosio and his vile associate Leopold, at the fell blow their iniquitous scheme received by the unthought-of elopement of Viola; and every hope of future success was destroyed, when they learned in whose protection she had found refuge. They both immediately fled from Sicily in the vessel prepared to convey the marchesa away, and, joining the Spanish fleet, Ambrosio made Leopold his chaplain.

It had hitherto been Don Ambrosio's successful aim to acquire fame and glory in his profession: and now, in conformity to the capricious versatility of his disposition, it seemed all at once his wish to render his name infamous, to tarnish his former honours, and blight his laurels, by every action that was inimical to probity and humanity; assigning to the slight reproaches of his

conscience, that the misery of mind his disappointed love inflicted pleaded sufficiently in excuse for every enormity he could commit, for that his reason was shook by his mental anguish. Public indignation now ran high against this once popular young man. Many of his exploits might have brought him to the scaffold; but in consideration of the eminent services he had rendered his country he was not brought to trial, civil or military; he only received his catholic majesty's dismission from every post and honour he had been distinguished by.

The vile apostate Leopold, impelled by dire necessity, became the follower of the justly degraded Ambrosio's fortunes, and soon their fertile invention struck out a plan not more gratifying to their avarice than to their sanguinary souls. They entered into a league with a number of profligate men of all descriptions, who formed themselves into a society, which spread itself with astonishing facility, not only over Spain and Portugal, but through France, Italy, and Germany. The successes of all parties were

for the general benefit; whilst each individual was to be supported from the general fund, which was to provide for every expense necessary for carrying on the different branches of this predaceous society, who were sworn to feed upon the public by every act of fraud and villany, comprised within the efforts of the specious swindler, the elegant gentlemanly gambler, the daring banditti, the dark assassin, the midnight robber, and a formidable squadron of ships fitted out for the lucrative employment of piracy.

The latter department, as well as the management of a great part of the banditti allotted to act in Spain, the commander in chief, Ambrosio, assigned to himself and Leopold, who now thought it time to throw off entirely the sacerdotal habit. To find an eligible habitation to secret their treasures, troops, and shipping in, was for some time a grand and difficult pursuit; but conte Vicenza having been amongst the first who enlisted under their villanous banners in Italy as a gambler, from his great intimacy with conte Elfridii, between whom and himself a perfect understanding subsisted,

soon gained that vindictive man to enrol himself amongst his kindred villains; and nothing could have proved more fortunate for the general security than such an acquisition, since the only patrimony Elfridii possessed was that very castle of the Pyrenees where the scene of this romance has lain for so many of our pages.

Fernando conte Elfridii was lineally descended from the princes of Catalonia; and one of his more immediate ancestors being amongst those Spaniards who drove the French out of Naples in 1504, married a Neapolitan lady; and settling in that country, it became the native place of his progeny. By unexpected but legal succession this impregnable castle at length devolved to Elfridii; but its situation was too horrid, its condition too much out of repair, to admit a thought of his disposing of it to advantage; and he had resolved upon having the structure razed, to make money of its valuable materials, when the liberal offers of the predaceous community was joyfully accepted by him; and when he fled from Naples, in despair upon Clementina's ac-

cepting the proposals of his rival, he made an excursion into Spain, to put Ambrosio and his people into possession of the castle, and to teach them the secrets of it; for with the title-deeds of the castle was a key to the else impenetrable secrets of the place; some of which, however, Elfridii reserved for his own knowledge alone, thinking that in some sort of way he might convert them to his own advantage hereafter; and depending upon the faith of Iago, an old negro, who had been reared in the castle and locally attached to the place, his fidelity descending from owner to owner as steadfastly as an heirloom. Elfridii knew that Iago was well acquainted with almost all the machinery of the place; but swearing him to secresy, he concealed from Ambrosio's knowledge the church, with many of the vaults and impenetrable places annexed to the castle; and whilst exploring the horrid recesses of this dreadful fortress, he formed that diabolical plan of revenge he but too successfully executed.

Ambrosio, now put in possession of a place which seemed by some miracle abso-

lutely built on purpose for his accommodation and security, found it expedient to drop the well-known name of Ambrosio de Montalvan, and assumed that of Don Manuel de Bascara; and Leopold, from the same necessity foregoing his proper name, took the Spanish one of Garcias.

The only person in the world for whom Elfridii felt a particle of disinterested attachment was Francisco Gassendi, the monk who had educated him. Francisco possessed some virtues and many failings; he was brave and generous; his heart formed by nature, humane, affectionate, and just; but his temper was violent, and his passions ever were his masters. Forced by his parents at an early age into the church, inclination never led him along the steady path of duty. Well aware of all that sanctity of life his profession called for, he often attempted to be what conscience pointed out; but the attempts were but the feeble efforts of an unsteady mind, and alternately he appeared as the saint and the sinner. As a learned man he had been selected to superintend the education of El-

fridii, and, as there was no very great disparity in their years, they soon became companions and friends.

From the strength of this attachment Elfridii possessed an influence over the mind of Francisco that enabled him quickly to win the monk into the villanous community he belonged to. The ambition of Francisco would not allow him to remain a common member of this fraternity. He had interest enough at Rome to get himself translated to a convent of Observantine friars at Cadaques, and by the artful intrigues of some of the devotees whom he confessed at Naples, he soon was instituted a member of the Inquisitorial synod. With the predaceous society thus fully in his power, he quitted Naples for Cadaques, where, though rigid was the Observantine order, he affected even superior austerity, and, under the veil of sanctity, refusing even the few comforts of the convent, took up his abode in a solitary cave in a gloomy forest not far distant from the town. The reputed austerity of his life soon rendered him famous; he shortly became the most

popular preacher in the province, and the favourite confessor to all the neighbouring convents and pious families.

The cave of this holy impostor communicated, as our sagacious reader already presages, with the castle; the secret of the church, with many others considered by Elfridii as co-operating to their mutual interest, was confided by him to Francisco, who was thus placed in the castle as an object of terror and of safety; and Don Manuel, ere he was aware, found himself but second where he claimed the first place. In the power of the inquisitor, he bowed to his authority; and every daring vassal belonging to Don Manuel trembled at Francisco's frown, who, though as an individual causing terror, was in fact the greatest safeguard they possessed.

In all the secrets of the dreadful tribunal, Francisco knew the moment danger threatened the society, and, by the chicanery of priestcraft, kept his confederates secure from ecclesiastic vengeance until the moment of retribution allotted by heaven arrived;

when, in the pursuit of cruelty and revenge, their evil destiny suffered them to imprison the holy Anselmo.

Possessing the confidence of so many persons in Catalonia, Francisco too was of considerable advantage to the subtile designs of the sharper, and to the more open frauds of the banditti; and when, in his perambulations as a pious monk, or in his inquisitorial character, he learned any danger awaited the community, it was agreed that he should announce it by beating a drum, formed like an Indian gong, which was placed in a cavern underneath the castle, from whence sound so forcibly conveyed itself, that it warned every sentinel around the castle of impending danger, upon which, as the beat of the drum directed, they and all the fraternity either flew to arms, or betook themselves to hiding-places in the rocks, or to the shipping. Our reader is now no longer at a loss to account for the tremendous noise that so alarmed Victoria the first night of her dreadful captivity; and as the good properties of Fran-

cisco's heart often recoiled from the crimes of his associates, he had sometimes recourse to the gong, and, under pretence of danger, put the assassins to flight; and often unsubdued conscience would whisper that danger threatening them in such a moment seemed like divine vengeance, and the meditated enormity perhaps was therefore never committed which caused Teresa's remark to our heroine upon the subject.

Elvira had not been very long at the castle of Manfredonia before a perfect understanding subsisted between her and Elfridii. They had each their deep-laid plots to pursue, and were happy in so able an auxiliary; besides, lady Elvira was completely in the power of Elfridii, from whom Polydore kept no secrets; and by whose advice the infant Theodore had been removed from Languedoc and consigned to the care of Francisco. Conte Vicenza was now ordered by them to conceal himself in the neighbourhood of Manfredonia, to aid their mutual operations, which they delayed not to commence.

CHAP. IV.

It has been already mentioned, that the only foible of the duca di Manfredonia's mind was the contemptible opinion he entertained of his own personal attractions. Had he known how to appreciate properly the favours so lavishly bestowed by Nature on him, he had, perhaps, been spared the succeeding misery of his life. Elfridii, well knowing this circumstance, and how much the disparity of Viola's years with his own had fed upon his mind, was truly sensible how promising a subject Lorenzo was for speedily imbibing the subtle poison he meant to administer. High in the duca's estimation, and his understanding so appreciated, the words of Elfridii bore with them the power of almost instant conviction; and the first potion of the maddening drug he administered was once at table, by relating, while his eyes were fixed in marked scru-

tiny upon the innocent Viola, the story of Don Ambrosio's enormities and consequent disgrace.

The invidious gaze of Elfridii, by wounding the delicacy of the duchessa and awakening her indignation, called forth the brightest tints of vermilion upon her lovely cheeks; and as he proceeded, the atrocities he enumerated of Ambrosio's committing giving full conviction to the idea she had secretly cherished of his being the murderer of her father, as well as of her uncle—and by awakening a variety of the most painful sensations, all embittered by the agonising thought of her having been the cause of death to both those parents—she at length, after her intelligent countenance had undergone a marked diversity of changes, fell from her seat in a swoon, and, although the duca was almost distracted at beholding his adored wife in such a situation, the apparent cause of her being so, nor the artful exclamations and half articulated whispers of Elvira and Elfridii, were not lost upon him, and the dreadful foundation of his future misery was from that moment laid; and so

skilful were those who built upon it, that in a very short period the baleful pile was formed on which his happiness was sacrificed.

The name of Viola was now daily discovered to be carved with lover-like devices or poesy upon some new tree. A young and beautiful stranger was seen by the vassals and domestics hovering about the castle in various disguises, whom a lady, attired like the duchessa, often met in the dusk of the evening and in secret places. Our reader will be at no loss to guess that the handsome stranger was the vile Vicenza, who became a Proteus upon the occasion, taking care, however, to avoid the recognition of any of the domestics who knew him; or that the lady was the diabolical Elvira, properly attired for their infamous designs: and so well did these vile confederates manage their plot, that in the course of a few weeks the duca di Manfredonia almost believed that his wife repented the choice she had made, that the profligate degraded Ambrosio had ever been in possession of her affections, and that he himself was the most mi-

serable of men. Yet so fondly did he lean to the belief of her purity, of her superiority over all the world—so tenderly did he still adore her—that, whenever he contemplated the seraphic sweetness of her expressive countenance, he felt the influence of some resistless power within his mind arising to confute all that he had before thought conviction; and had not the execrable fiends who had sworn the destruction of his peace been more prolific in diabolical desires than human nature had ever before evinced itself, the smile of Viola would have defeated all their machinations. As it was, Lorenzo was forced into a belief which almost tortured him to madness; but he so idolised her whom he thought no longer attached to him, that he could not endure the idea of calling the blush of shame upon her cheek by his upbraidings; and, avoiding every explanation, he at length unfortunately fled from Manfredonia to the castle of Palino, to unbosom himself to the conte and contessa Ariosto, determined that their advice should guide him.

The merciless triumvirate were well

aware that Viola's was no common female mind; she had no foibles to work upon; and the ónly hope they had of her, was from the sad sympathy her mother's hapless fate had entwined with the very stamina of her heart. They knew she trembled at conjugal indifference, and shuddered at every tale that told of connubial discord. To sow the seeds of doubt and jealousy in her mind required the most delicate strokes of art; and Elvira most successfully contrived the means to cause events which awakened inevitably, but imperceptibly, suspicions of her Lorenzo's affection. Her mother's miseries thus impending over her, the dreadful similitude of their fate became at length her mournful contemplation. Had the constancy of her husband's attachment been openly arraigned by any one, she would have silenced with scorn the base accuser, and spurned with generous indignation each intruding suspicion from her breast; but the circumstances which ruined her peace seemed presented by chance alone, so well did Elvira perform her task; and the flown cheerfulness of Viola, so lately ac-

quired and so becoming to her, her languid look, her loss of appetite and rest, all conspired to confirm Lorenzo in the horrid belief that she was wretched because she was his wife.

Viola well remembering her incomparable mother never complained, never breathed forth a murmur, resolved, like her, to bear her misery in silence; and soon, like her hapless mother too, her only comfort was to weep over her child, fold it in her fond arms, and sadly trace out its resemblance to its still adored father: but ever at the sound of Lorenzo's approach she would hastily chase the tears away, and with smiles resign their son to his caresses. But those smiles were so woe-fraught, so indicative of mental anguish, Lorenzo could not support the agony they inflicted in his tortured bosom; and, to hide his feelings, he would rush from her presence, and leave her to the insupportable belief that disgust at beholding her occasioned his retreat.

Viola, when resolving never to complain, had also determined never to make a con-

fidant; for not even to her Clementina would she breathe a sound that could take from the merit of Lorenzo; and this amiable conduct was afterwards converted by her enemies into proofs of guilt.

At length, the day on which the duca left the castle of Manfredonia for that of Palino, the suspicions which Viola had so long and painfully entertained were put to instant flight, by the expression of his countenance, as she caught him gazing upon her a few moments before his departure. She clearly saw that he was wretched, but saw, too, conviction of her being still in possession of his tenderest affection; and the impulse of the moment was to throw herself into his arms, and conjure him to reveal to her the cause of his afflictions; but this wise resolution was defeated by the precipitate retreat of the ill-fated duca, who, upon perceiving her observation of him, rushed from the apartment, and instantly began his journey, leaving it to Elfridii to announce his departure; assigning as a cause his having been summoned by express to

attend a dying friend at Naples, and was in too great affliction to bear the pang of a parting interview with her.

That Lorenzo should absent himself from home without bidding her adieu, though plausible his excuse, struck like the cold hand of death upon her throbbing heart; but she shed no tear, neither did she make any comment when she received this mortifying intelligence from Elfridii. But as she now in all her sorrows felt consolation only in the sweet smiles and endearments of her child, she soon quitted the villanous Elfridii, and bent her faltering steps to the apartments of Orlando; and on her way, in a gallery through which she was about to pass, hung a full-length portrait of Lorenzo. Her eyes instinctively fixed upon it—her feet became fastened to the spot on which she stood—her arms insensibly entwined across her bosom—her head sunk against a pillar—while mournful sickening fancy saw the days of past happiness flit like pallid phantoms before Lorenzo's picture. At length, a half-stifled sob of grief aroused her from her agonising reverie; and quickly turning

her head, she saw the faithful Bernardo with tears chasing each other down his furrowed cheeks.

This worthy being had long been made independent by Viola, but nothing could induce him to quit her service; and high in her esteem, and in the duca's, he ever experienced the greatest degree of respect from every individual of their family.

"My dear young lady," said the agitated Bernardo, "I can no longer bear to see you thus; and must take the liberty of speaking to you upon the subject of your misery. Oh, may St. Rosolia defend you, and encompass you with her powers! for all the devils of Mount Ætna are at work to blast your happiness. Be no more deceived—that lady Elvira is a wily serpent that will sting you to the heart. Conte Elfridii is a monster, more barbarous and ungrateful than even Leopold himself. Oh Father of mercies! could he be human, and, seeing such a glorious work as this, aim at destroying it? Yes, inhuman fiends! they have planned the destruction of your fame and happiness. My deluded lord believes

your heart directed to Ambrosio, and has left the castle almost distracted. It is all too true—I suspected, watched, and overheard their villanous cabals. Dearest lady, delay not; write to my absent lord. The words of truth must blast at once the tales of falsehood. Commit the letter to my care, and, with the permission of St. Rosolia, if he is upon the surface of the globe I will deliver it to him; for in bringing back your lost happiness to you, Heaven knows how freely I would resign my life."

The agony of Viola's mind upon this intelligence cannot be described. Horror at first chained up her faculties, until its icy fetters were thawed as her eyes again rested upon the portrait of her heart's lord; when, bursting into tears of anguish, she caught the hand of Bernardo, and, pressing it with fervent gratitude to her lips, promised to follow his advice on the instant; and immediately retiring to her gabinetto, wrote to her deluded husband such a letter, that, had it ever been delivered to him, must have had all the happy effect the faithful Bernardo expected. It was written by the

chaste and ardent pen of purity and affection; and every word must have struck with conviction to the heart of Lorenzo:—but Elvira had followed the footsteps of the devoted Viola, had overheard all that had passed between her and Bernardo; and that faithful and ill-fated being was bereft of life by the assassins of the iniquitous consociates in his way to Tuscany, whither he was hastening to restore peace to the mind of his lovely and beloved lady.

In two days after the departure of the unfortunate Bernardo from Manfredonia, a letter was delivered to Viola by Fidato, the respected steward of the castle. The duchessa had no reason to doubt the authenticity of this letter; it appeared to have been written by Lorenzo; and she, as well as Fidato, believed it had come with a parcel of dispatches which he had received from the duca by his own courier. This letter was brief, but seemed the ebullitions of long suppressed tenderness; but not as if in answer to hers, which she knew could not then have reached him. He seemed to hint at the perfidy of supposed friends, and

of his having much to communicate to her before he again entered his castle; and entreated her to meet him at ten o'clock that night unknown to every one, in a temple in the bosom of a close wood at a small distance from the castle.

This prospect of returning happiness banished at once the gloom which had lowered for more than two months over the most expressive of countenances; and the smiles of her heart, in spite of all resistance, spread over her face, and influenced her voice, her air, her manner.

Elvira, completely an adept in the art of plotting, was even more than usually insinuating in her conversation that day; was so assiduously attentive to Viola, she seemed her very shadow, and left her not for a single moment. In vain the politeness of the duchessa strove to veil the disgust she felt for Elvira, or the chagrin she experienced in her presence; and not without an effort approaching to rudeness could she escape from the wary fiend in time for the appointment she conceived she had with Lorenzo. The spotless purity of Viola was shocked

and mortified to see the good father Rinaldo during the whole of that day an attentive observer of her conduct, which seemed most unequivocally to surprise and pain him; but though the blush of shame overspread her cheeks, and the tear of grief trembled in her eyes, on finding her purity suspected, she yet consoled herself with the flattering belief that in a very few hours all would be explained to that good man's satisfaction.

As the hour of ten drew near, Viola hastened to the nursery; and taking the sleeping Orlando in her arms, impressed a kiss of even unusual fervor upon his lips, as she breathed the ardent wish that when next she kissed her child the hearts of his parents might be as firmly united as her lips were then with his. This tender idea drew tears of trembling sensibility from her eyes; and at this moment a time-piece in the chamber chimed the hour. Hastily kissing her son for the last time, Viola gave him to his too observant nurse, and in visible agitation quitted the apartments of her boy and hastened to the fatal temple. A man was waiting her approach; his figure was

that of Lorenzo's; she rushed into his arms with an exclamation of tenderness, and, subdued by a thousand joyful and affecting emotions, fainted; when the man, no other than the base Vicenza, bore her in that helpless state to a carriage, which was waiting with some more of Elfridii's creatures at a little distance from the park.

The motion of the carriage soon called this innocent victim of revenge to her senses; but the sound of the treacherous Polydore's voice destroyed at once every ray of hope and joy. Horror now sealed up her senses; and in the most pitiable situation, falling from one swoon into another, she was conveyed into a ship, which in due time bore the wretched Viola into a creek belonging to the Pyrenean castle, into which this miserable captive was conveyed, attended by every fear, by every pang, that could agonise a mind devoid of guilt.

Don Manuel was then out upon a cruise, but the ruthless Garcias was at home, and the sight of the captive brought in by Polydore gave diabolical pleasure to his vindictive heart: but in beholding the fiend Leopold

in this her prison at once proclaimed to Viola the magnitude of her calamities. Her senses forsook her; for mental misery and horror had brought on a fever so high, so malign, that for many weeks the surgeons of the castle had scarcely a hope for her life; but Heaven spared her that existence the cruelties of her enemies afterwards deprived her of. She did recover, yet slowly; although she exerted herself to aid her physicians in banishing disease (though miserable was existence to her) for the sake of her unborn babe, to whose life she could not believe the cruelty of her enemies would extend.

CHAP. V.

It would be tedious to enumerate the days of misery Viola passed in this dreadful prison, since they were all alike wretched. Don Manuel returned to the castle, under the influence of his good propensities, and was shocked, was grieved to find the idol of his affections in such a place. Too quickly, however, these amiable feelings vanished, and Viola, in addition to her other calamities, had to suffer daily, nay almost hourly, the insulting declarations of Ambrosio's unsubdued passion for her. But her heart was the temple where purity had enshrined itself; and there is something so hallowed in dignified virtue, that the profligate Manuel dared to offer no further insult to the captive duchessa, than the perpetual avowal of his unconquerable attachment to her.

At length the hour for Viola's confinement drew near. In prison, and such a prison!

torn from her husband, all her friends! without consolation, without one female near her! Was that moment to arrive.....She wept, she shuddered, but resolved, for the sake of her child, to bear all with firmness. But the attachment of Don Manuel meliorated all that was in his power of the forlornness of her situation; every thing that wealth could obtain was procured for her; every thing which affection could suggest, for comfort and for safety, he had provided, and a respectable woman, released from amongst the dungeon captives, to wait upon and nurse her. The moment which Viola almost hoped would terminate her existence at last arrived; and in five months after she had been inhumanly trepanned from happiness and her husband's protection was her daughter born, whom Francisco baptised by the name of Matilda, after Lorenzo's respected grandmother, the late duchessa di Manfredonia.

The apartments allotted to the ill-fated Viola were those afterwards inhabited by her husband and her son. In them Francisco often visited her; when she taught his heart

to feel the highest touches of pity and admiration it was capable of conceiving; and had she confided in him, it is probable, in defiance of his attachment to Elfridii he would have restored her to her husband. But still feeding upon the hope of her letter and Bernardo's testimony clearing her fame and constancy to Lorenzo, and of his consequent researches tracing her to her dreadful prison, she forbore, from motives of pride and delicacy, to announce herself to the few persons she was allowed to see in the castle; while, on the other hand, her deadly foes, for their own safety, were careful to conceal her real rank, and she was simply known in the castle as 'the widow of a Sicilian gentleman killed by Polydore in a duel—and she being the only witness, it was necessary, for his security, to keep her in secret confinement.'

Elfridii two or three times visited the Pyrenean castle, for the diabolical satisfaction of increasing the mental anguish of this hapless victim of his insatiate vengeance, by obliging her to hear and read letters from the unfortunate Lorenzo to him, by

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which she had the misery of finding that, although her husband still remembered her with tenderness, he believed her the child of frailty; and his letters were so indicative of hopeless woe, of agonised despondence, that in despite of her indignation, her scorn of Elfridii, she would condescend to kneel at his feet, and sue with all that melting eloquence humanity would have found resistless, to Elfridii, " to restore the peace of her Lorenzo, of his patron, his friend." But all she ever obtained by this humiliation was to hear him, with the ruthless exultation of a fiend, " glory in the triumph of his plots of vengeance, take to himself the credit of her degradation, and assure her his deadly hate and persecutions would never terminate, until her fame should be considered infamous through the world, her name the scorn and scourge of her husband and her son, and until her Lorenzo's happiness was blasted in every shape that vengeance and malice could devise."

At length, one day, with barbarous exultation, Elfridii put a letter into Viola's hands that struck on her heart the final

blow to peace, to every wish for life: it was from her husband, and in it was mentioned his intended marriage with Elvira. The wretched duchessa fell to the ground in a swoon, and, when respiration returned, perception seemed no longer to be hers. For several hours she appeared insensible to all her miseries. At length the gentle pressure of her infant's fingers twined round one of hers recalled her suspended faculties—her child was folded in her arms. But she looked beyond this world for comfort; in this there was not now left a hope for her to rest upon.

Miserable as the preceding letters of Lorenzo had made her, she still felt a kind of forlorn consolation in perusing them. To see her name traced, although with the attendance of every possible humiliation, by her Lorenzo; to press to her heart, her lips, the paper he had touched; and to know that, even believed unworthy, still she was beloved by the lord of her affections, gave some sad comfort to her breaking heart. But even that sad comfort was torn by the ruthless hand of cruelty away. For Lo-

renzo's second marriage she was not prepared; and that marriage too with Elvira, the fiend who had so ably aided in her destruction, annihilated every feeling, but those of horror and dismay—until the idea of Bernardo's failing in his attempt to clear her fame, and that Lorenzo had refused to hear him, and had so far forgotten his once loved Viola, in one short year, as to think of a successor, awakened her thoughts to every pang of grief that wounded love and pride could give. She knew too, by this second marriage, he had been led to believe her dead; and thus every hope of his seeking her was cut off for ever, and with it every prospect for her child, her Matilda, who was thus rent from honourable society, her father's love, his name, his protection, even his knowledge of her existence:—and when she was laid in that grave where mental anguish fast was hurrying her, what would be this hapless alien's fate? who would rear her in the path of virtue? Purity recoiled from the dreadful prospect which lay before her child; the mother shuddered, and, to save her daughter from

eternal destruction, fervently prayed to Heaven that her own miserable existence might be prolonged.

As the hope of ever being restored to fame and to her husband was now no more, Viola determined to confide her hapless story, her rank, and name, to Francisco, and to implore his protection for her child. That consolation however was denied her, Francisco being at that period called to Madrid upon inquisitorial business; and Don Manuel too was absent when the last fell blow was given to the devoted duchessa's happiness. But he returned shortly after; when the female captive who still attended her informed him of some new calamity having befallen her lady in his absence, of her subsequent illness, and piteous melancholy. The heart of Don Manuel was at that moment accessible to humanity, and he was shocked and grieved at the intelligence; and wishing to behold Viola, unseen by her, to observe from her appearance what fears were to be entertained for her health, the attendant Leonora placed him in the apartments of

the duchessa in a situation advantageous to his design.

The infant Matilda was then in the arms of her mother, whose maternal feelings at that moment had conquered every other. She was singing her child to sleep. Her voice, whether in speaking or singing, was gifted with the power of fascination: it sounded now so piteous, but so low, as if she feared the pathos of her notes should seem like murmurs at the decrees of Providence. Her whole appearance was so touching, so indicative of silent, uncomplaining, deep-felt woe, that Don Manuel was subdued, and, starting from his place of concealment, fell at her feet, " implored forgiveness for all the sorrows he had ever caused her, and, solemnly pledging himself to restore her to fame and happiness, even at the peril of his own life and that of his associates, assured her that at the dawn of the succeeding day he would set sail for Italy, see the duca di Manfredonia, clear her immaculate fame, and prove his accusations of the perfidy of her enemies true,

even before the tribunal of the Inquisition."

For herself, the duchessa would have rejected even fame and happiness from the murderer of her father; but affection for her child prompted her gratefully to accept his promises, which he generously forbore to tell her teemed with such imminent danger to himself. He offered now to take her and Matilda with him to Manfredonia. But to this proposition the purity of the duchessa started insuperable objections: her pride of conscious virtue led her to wish to be emancipated from her dreadful captivity by her husband, or his agents; and to return with the very man with whom her fame had been blasted, was incompatible with every precept of prudence, with every feeling of delicacy. Don Manuel therefore determined to go without her; and only that this expedition required to be immediately undertaken, if possible to prevent the nuptials of Lorenzo, he would have postponed his intended departure until the return of Francisco from Madrid, that he might leave Viola under his protection.

For the success of his generous project, Don Manuel knew it would be necessary to conceal his intentions from all his associates, to whom it threatened danger the most formidable; and although Don Manuel knew the performance of his design would be at the peril of his own safety as well as theirs, so much did he, at that moment, prize the restoration of Viola's happiness, that he would have thought it cheaply purchased with his own life and those of half mankind. Orders for his voyage he therefore issued, as if for some piratical enterprise, and even to his friend Garcias he invented a delusive tale, as a reason for his intended precipitate departure. But wary as the subtile Manuel thought himself, the more subtile Elfridii cruelly proved the frustration of his generous purpose. More deeply initiated in the secrets of the castle than any other of the community, it was in Elfridii's power to wander over it, an invisible spy, at pleasure; and in one of those unseen rambles he overheard the conference in which Don Manuel promised to restore Viola to fame and to her husband, and

hastily communicated this important discovery to his two vile associates, Garcias and Polydore. The victim of their malice was about to be snatched from their power, and not only their lives, but those of the whole community, sacrificed without scruple for the happiness of an individual whom they all three hated. They dared not openly oppose Don Manuel, who lived in the hearts of his men; and if they exasperated him, they knew he could quickly find means of vengeance: they had therefore only to provide for their own safety by rendering his design fruitless, and to destroy suspicion by dissimulation equal to his own.

Among the wretches devoted to Garcias, was one more diabolical, more sanguinary, than any assassin in the whole fraternity; and so much more cruel, more ferocious, was he deemed than all the rest, that even his companions gave him the appropriate name of Sanguinario. This wretch, who had aided Leopold in the murder of the archbishop of Montreal; this wretch, who had, while in the service of the marchese of Palermo, met with a dreadful accident, at

which time the humanity of Viola led her to show him the most touching kindness—kindness that did touch his heart, for Viola was the only person upon earth he had ever felt a particle of philanthropy towards; this wretch was fixed upon as the perpetrator of their atrocious purpose. It was agreed upon by these dæmons of iniquity, that while Leonora was taking her supper, that night, Sanguinario should enter through a private door, the secret of which Elfridii was to teach him, into the duchessa's apartments, and there murder the unsuspecting Viola and her child—and, after the barbarous deed was effected, so to dispose of the poniard, as to make the horrid catastrophe appear the work of her own distempered hand: and better to colour this supposition, conte Vicenza, an adept in the art of forgery, wrote a few unconnected lines, in imitation of the duchessa's writing, addressed to Don Manuel, and highly expressive of mental derangement.

At the usual hour Leonora retired to her supper, and as usual the lovely duchessa was the sole nurse, and tender guard of her Ma-

tilda, who lay sleeping in her bed, unconscious of her inestimable mother's approaching fate—Viola kneeling by the side of her babe, exactly in that employment in which a Christian would wish to die. She was at prayers when the ruthless Sanguinario entered the room, unseen, unheard, by his pious victim, into whose beauteous bosom he plunged the weapon of unmerited vengeance. The lamp, which lay upon a table near, at that dreadful moment emitted a brightened ray: it gleamed upon the face of Viola. Sanguinario now beheld her celestial countenance, and for the first time knew who the victim was he had been ordered to immolate. The fatal blow recoiled upon his hitherto callous heart, and defeated the further progress of his murderous mission. Dashing the reeking poniard from his trembling hand, he franticaly retreated. So shaken, so conscience-struck, his senses fled, never to return, and left him that miserable wretch the dismayed Victoria beheld in the cavern.

With her death-blow Viola received the conviction of the cruel hand which ultimately

directed it; and trembling for the safety of her child, she snatched it from the bed; and although feeling the stream of life fast issuing from her bosom, she took the lamp into the library, where she placed it to light her as with faltering steps she measured her way to the parlour, where she conjectured Don Manuel then was. With the convulsive hand of death she opened the room-door, where sat Don Manuel with her three murderers, Elfridii, Polydore, and Garcias.—She staggered towards the petrified Ambrosio, put her child into his arms, with a supplicating look that conveyed more than language could have expressed, then instantly sunk at his feet, and closed her beauteous eyes for ever.

CHAP. VI.

It is far easier for our feeling reader to conceive, than the feeble historian to pourtray, the sensations of Don Manuel at this dreadful moment. But long he was not left to contend with mental agony. Viola had scarcely breathed her last sigh, when he fell senseless by the side of this his heart's idol.

The screaming infant was saved from falling by the youth Diego, who was in waiting, and conveyed by him to Leonora; while the beauteous corse of the murdered innocent was borne to her own chamber. The fit of Don Manuel continued so long, it alarmed the castle surgeons; and when recovered from it he was found to be in a strong delirium. Grief and horror brought on a phrensy fever, which raged for several weeks, and then left him so weak, so low, that for some weeks more the most serious

alarms were entertained for his safety. At length he shook off indisposition, but never the dreadful impression of Viola's death.

During the deprivation of Don Manuel's reason, the fiends of cruelty had time to arrange for their own security, and for their further progress in villany. Francisco returned to the castle the day succeeding the perpetration of this most horrible murder, which was proved to him by the crafty Elfridii as the fatal work of her own distempered hand. The fastidious Francisco, who in so many instances gave such latitude to his own conscience, now refused to the butchered manes of the virtuous Viola its last sad rite in consecrated ground. Her body, therefore, was deposited in a vault belonging to the castle, pointed out by the vile Elfridii, so guarded by impervious secrets, so surrounded by dangerous passes, he dared to hope the eye of detection could never penetrate to the hidden spot.

As the state Don Manuel was then reduced to rendered the murder of Matilda no longer necessary, she was allowed to live. To Francisco's care she was confided

by Elfridii, who made it appear so clearly to the monk, her concealment from Don Manuel being absolutely essential to the general safety, that Francisco readily promised to secrete her for ever from Don Manuel's knowledge, and to fabricate a story of her death—lest, while under the influence of grief for her mother's fate, he should follow the dictates of his impetuous feelings, and, by restoring the infant to her father, bring inevitable destruction upon the whole community.

Every thing being now arranged to their satisfaction, Polydore and Elfridii returned to Italy, to proceed in their villanous cooperations. It was reported that Matilda expired in convulsions for want of that nourishment her mother had cherished her with, and Leonora was in the dead of night conveyed back to her dungeon by the inhuman Garcias. Death in such various forms so frequently visited the castle, that in a very few days after the murder of Viola, and the supposed death of her child, they ceased even to be mentioned, except as the cause of Don Manuel's dreadful illness; and no

one ever took the trouble of doubting the plausible story of the infant's exit, who was secretly conveyed by Francisco to a neighbouring convent, the sanctified sisterhood of which were much in his power, and therefore devoted to him; and in this monastery, as an unknown orphan, was the poor alienated lady Matilda di Treviso reared.

When Don Manuel recovered his reason, and was made to believe Viola had fallen by her own hand, and that her child also was no more, he no longer thought of sacrificing himself and associates to clear the fame of her who existed not to benefit by it. And now we must beg leave to conduct our patient readers back to Italy, there to learn the progress of events necessary for them to become acquainted with.

When the unfortunate duca di Manfredonia reached the castle of Palino, and imparted to his friends there the dreadful suspicions which had been forced into his ingenuous mind, great and terrible was the shock he communicated to the affectionate hearts of the conte and contessa Ariosto;

and the ardent Clementina, although then in a situation to render travelling dangerous to her, instantly proposed making an attempt to reach Manfredonia before the moment of her confinement. Firmly she believed the purity of Viola immaculate, and that all which had arisen to create suspicion was through the machinations of Ambrosio to blast that happiness he envied. She doubted not being able to win every secret from the guileless bosom of Viola, and to clear away, by her personal investigation, every shadow which had fallen upon a fame she believed so spotless, that even the deposition of the pope himself to the contrary would have been by her disregarded. Her adoring husband shuddered at the idea of a journey at such a moment, but, dreading more from the tortures uncertainty and anxiety would inflict upon such an ardent mind, acceded to her proposal. Lorenzo, catching at once all that hope and confidence which glowed in the bosom of Clementina, saw happiness once more in view—though bitterly arraigning his own repre-

hensible and blind credulity, which had led him to suspect the affection of Viola.

Altidore, trembling for the safety of his adored wife, arranged for every necessary attendant to accompany her in this anxious journey. The infant Alphonso, then about a year old, was to remain at Palino; and the time appointed for their departure was just advanced within one short hour, when the artful villanous Elfridii, with haggard looks expressive of fatigue, consternation, grief, arrived, and, in a tone of well-acted distraction, demanding an instant and private audience of conte Ariosto, announced to him the elopement of Viola with Ambrosio.

This most horrible intelligence could not be concealed from the wretched husband or Clementina. To them therefore the feeling Altidore conveyed it with all the caution his tender affection for both inspired. But, gently as the blow was suffered to fall on them, it was in itself so direful, it almost annihilated them. In all the wild derangement of mental despair and anguish, Cle-

mentina affirmed her cousin had been basely trepanned away by Ambrosio and Leopold, and raved of setting out instantly to seek her through every circle of the earth. A letter was now put into her hands from Elvira, enclosing one apparently from the fugitive, which, without the precaution of such an envelope, the watchful Altidore would not have allowed to reach her at such a moment. This atrocious forgery was to bid Clementina farewell for ever. So artfully had Polydore and Elvira composed it, no one could disbelieve its validity. Every line breathed the sentiments of a naturally pure mind, seduced by the insidious sophistry of a beloved deceiver; and every sentence it contained evinced the most agonising struggles between virtue and vice; and acknowledging that she had sacrificed every consideration for Don Ambrosio, she conjured Clementina to forget that she yet existed—but not to forsake her boy.

This epistle was a dreadful conviction Clementina had no means to doubt. It accelerated the birth of a still-born child, and for many days her own life was despaired

of. At length she was pronounced out of danger. But that playful vivacity, so lately the delight of her husband and all around her, was fled never to return. The supposed lapse from virtue of that adored being she had believed purity's own child fell heavily upon her sensibility, and health and spirits bid her adieu for ever.

To pourtray the dismay, affliction, and despair of Lorenzo, the wretched husband, would be impossible. Woe's most corrosive darts plunged to the inmost recesses of his agonised heart. A letter similar to that prepared for Clementina was delivered to him, but with the dreadful addition of confessing, " that she was compelled to fly to prevent the birth of Ambrosio's child in the castle of Manfredonia ;" and in all the maddening anguish of wounded love and pride Lorenzo returned to Manfredonia, to feed upon his misery, to weep over his deserted child, and alternately to curse and fondly cherish the remembrance of Viola.

After the fatal success of her diabolical confederacy, Elvira returned to Tuscany,

high in the estimation of the wretched duca; her winning attention to his Orlando, her fascinating distress and delicacy of conduct upon the late unfortunate event, her amiable anxiety to save as much as possible the tarnished fame of the duchessa from virulent obloquy, all conspiring to raise her to a distinguished place in his estimation. This the wary Elfridii clearly saw; and as upon Lorenzo's humility he built his former success, so, now, circumstances having awakened another auxiliary, he resolved to profit by it, and, under the banners of wounded pride, to lead Elvira on to conquest.

It was in a few months after the amiable ill-fated duchessa had been carried off from her husband's castle, that the emissaries of Elfridii, as if by chance, brought the intelligence to Manfredonia of Viola having died in giving birth to a still-born son, at an obscure village in Gascony. Father Rinaldo was immediately dispatched thither, by the now almost distracted duca, to ascertain the fact. Elfridii had placed persons there to give the necessary testimony; and

some remarkable trinkets belonging to Viola, purloined for that purpose, were produced to the holy man, to substantiate the evidence. The grief, nay the despair of Lorenzo was now beyond all expectation, beyond all consolation. Had not the vice and perfidy of Viola been proved incontrovertibly to him, he had been more resigned to her loss. But the Christian's comfort of meeting those they love in a better world was cut off from him; and the horrible agonising idea, that in despite of her crimes his still tenderly adored Viola had deprived herself of the bliss of Paradise, was an unremitting corroding venom that poisoned the very vitals of his peace. Manfredonia, and indeed all Naples, became obnoxious to him; and he fled to Palino, to seek the only consolation that now was left to him; the pleasing anguish of talking to Clementina of what Viola once had been, and mingling his bitter tears with hers.

In such a moment as this, none but Elfridii and Elvira would have thought of luring him into a second marriage; none but Elfridii and Elvira could have proved successful.

Despair and grief had overthrown the firmness and powers of his mind; they worked upon his mortified pride and his humanity. Elvira assailed him with all her charms and blandishments. Elfridii, with every art that could promote his purpose, strove to persuade Lorenzo that the beautiful, the amiable, the accomplished Elvira, had for years past struggled with an unconquerable attachment to him; that upon his account she had refused many splendid alliances; and, lovely and fascinating as she was, she was still unmarried, because she could love none but Lorenzo. That to see Elvira his wife had been the first wish of conte Ariosto's heart; now every obstacle was removed, he panted for this alliance; yet, so great was his delicacy, he sedulously strove to hide those sentiments from all but him (Elfridii). Often Lorenzo seemed to listen to the subtle traitor, while every thought was fastened upon the memory of Viola. Often the rhetoric of the wily fiend worked upon his feelings; and in one unfortunate moment, when his pride and pity were awakened to the highest pitch of anima-

tion, he acceded to the proposal of Elfridii for becoming the husband of Elvira.

When left by the artful Elfridii to his own reflexions, Lorenzo shuddered at what he had yielded to. It was then too late. Elfridii, fearing a countermand, had hastened to Elvira with the duca's proposal. Lorenzo's honour was now engaged; he could not recede; he strove to reconcile himself to the idea of this involuntary union, believing that his breaking heart would soon release him from sublunary misery, and that in Elvira he should leave a tender inestimable parent to his Orlando. Shuddering at the union, the duca di Manfredonia led lady Elvira to the altar: the recollection how different were his sensations when he plighted his vows to Viola struck dreadfully upon his heart, and twice he fainted ere the awful ceremony was concluded.

CHAP. VII.

HIGH as her specious sister-in-law stood in the estimation of the unsuspecting Clementina, she yet felt strongly averse to this union. In vain did Altidore strive to reconcile her to it, by reminding her that it was the only hope in existence for the restoration of his amiable friend's blasted happiness. Fervently she wished to see the re-establishment of Lorenzo's peace, but not by this means. She felt it a slight to the superior charms of her cousin, whose memory, though dreadfully tarnished, she still adored; and although she owned it was a weakness, she felt jealous and offended. Her affectionate and indulgent husband, perceiving how much the idea of visiting Naples, or seeing Orlando at such a moment, pained her sensitive heart, declined for her and himself the pressing invitation of Lorenzo to accompany him and his

bride to Manfredonia, where the dreadful knowledge of a new calamity awaited the wretched duca.

It was necessary for Polydore and Elvira's deep-laid scheme of villany that Orlando should be disposed of. Elfridii had no objection to the measure, resolving that the boy should live, as thereby he had the power to hold the rod of vengeance over the heads of his two confederates, should they prove ungrateful, which his own feelings taught him to believe was more than possible. Orlando's principal nurse was a creature of Elfridii's, whom he found no difficulty in bribing to take a part in the diabolical plot. She declared her young lord was sickening for the small-dox. Elfridii had taken care that the family physician should be out of the way when Fidato sent express for him. Another therefore was summoned whom Elfridii had sent into the neighbourhood, belonging to the predaceous society, and who pronounced the child to be in the small pox of the most virulent kind. By his orders Orlando's chamber was darkened, and the anxious Rina'do himself went off

with a courier to Naples to summon all possible medical aid; but, before his return, Orlando, while under the influence of a soporific, was conveyed out of the castle, and a boy of his age and size, procured for the purpose, covered with pustules of the most malignant nature, was placed in his bed, and whom the physicians, on their arrival, declared to be in imminent danger. The event proved the truth of the prediction. The child died so putrid, so disfigured, that the cheat could not be detected; and so well did Elfridii carry his project into execution, that Polydore and Elvira, with the rest of the world, firmly believed Orlando was no more.

The anguish of the poor duca upon this calamity was, as might naturally be expected, dreadful: he had ever tenderly loved his child; but from the moment he believed his mother had forsaken him, he became if possible more interesting and dear to the heart of Lorenzo. All now that had remained to him of Viola was torn from him; and his affliction was direful, was piteous to behold. Elvira, now in the cha-

racter of an adoring wife, affected the deepest distress and mortification at the sorrows of her lord, and at his so much secluding himself from her society. Lorenzo was really shocked at giving pain to her he believed attached to him; he considered himself ungrateful to her, did violence to his own tortured feelings to save her from pain, chased from his eyes the tear of grief, appeared with her in company, and wore the smile of happiness in her presence, while his heart was wrung with the keenest pangs of anguish.

The supposed death of Orlando was another mining blow to the declining health of Clementina; and so sensibly was she affected by it, that her adoring husband instantly determined upon a change of scene. He immediately took her the continental tour, made her enter into all the dissipation her delicate state admitted of, and then proceeded with her to England to try the efficacy of her native air; and during this residence in England was our heroine Victoria born.

The cold and uncertain climate of Britain

soon, however, proved destructive to this delicate plant. The London physicians apprehended a rapid decline, and advised her immediate return to the south; and her almost distracted husband, at her own request, after she had visited the tomb of her mother at Clifton, hastened with her to Sicily; but in vain. In the castle of Palermo, and in Viola's own apartment, Clementina breathed her last, and in her twenty-first year fell a victim to that dæmon of revenge, who had blasted the fair fame of her idolised friend, kinswoman, and benefactress.

The remains of the lovely young contessa were conveyed to Tuscany, and there interred with all the pomp and respect her rank and virtues called for. Her wretched husband shut himself up in his castle with his children, secluded from all society, blending with his poignant grief self-accusation for having taken his adored wife so far northward; and in less than three years, as already stated, he fell another victim to Elfridii's villany.

The death of Clementina seemed to fill

up the measure of the duca di Manfredonia's misery; he moaned her as a sister, as a friend; and his heart groaned with anguish to know that with her was torn from him every individual who would talk with him of what Viola once had been; that now he knew not that person upon earth, save himself, that did not execrate her memory. He would have flown to sympathise with his distracted friend, had he not been well aware that his presence would only augment the grief of Altidore; but no longer able to conceal his own, he fled from society; and, in despite of the flattering murmurs of Elvira, indulged in the most profound and piteous melancholy. At length, the duchessa, with all the appearance of the most winning tenderness, proposed a voyage to visit the islands of the Archipelago, as an antidote to such unavailing sorrow, and to benefit his apparently declining health. The wretched Lorenzo, anxious if possible to fly from himself, gratefully acceded to the proposition.

They set out upon this expedition, attended by their anxious friend Elfridii, Ma-

ratti, a valet recommended by Elvira for the occasion, in place of the duca's own respectable one (who had a most invincible horror of the sea), and Bianca; and, in two months after their embarkation, Elvira returned to Naples a disconsolate widow, bringing with her a superb coffin, said to contain the body of the duca, who had died at sea in consequence of breaking a blood vessel. The coffin was conveyed, in all the pomp of ostentatious woe, from Naples to the castle of Manfredonia, where, after lying in state three days, and high masses performed throughout the province for the repose of his soul, the coffin, containing the body of a poor sailor, was deposited, with every funeral splendor, in the family mausoleum with the ancestors of Lorenzo. The inconsolable widow remained at Naples to bewail her irreparable loss; and the sincerity of her grief has been already most unequivocally evinced to our readers.

The final destruction of Lorenzo had not been so long delayed, after his marriage with Elvira had been effected, only to elude the eye of suspicion, which the guilty feared

might see too far if they so speedily extirpated the whole race of Manfredonia; but at length Polydore became impatient for the possession of the Manfredonia property, which, as there was no heir to claim it, would all devolve to the widow upon the duca's demise; and Elfridii, weary of appearing in the mask of friendship to the man he hated, no longer opposed the fiat for the duca's annihilation. The voyage was therefore proposed; they embarked in a vessel belonging to the predaceous society, bearing English colours. They visited some of the islands, that, should inquiry hereafter spread so far, their having been there might be ascertained.

Lorenzo, although he had before visited the Archipelago, seemed better for the excursion; as, while wandering about these celebrated places of ancient and immortal genius, fancy allowed the shadow of Viola to wander with him; and all his thoughts, though mournfully confined to his own breast, were there, in idea, participated by her; but at last the fatal moment for his doom arrived. Another of the predaceous

caravel joined them at Rhodes. A strong opiate was infused into Lorenzo's sherbet; and, while operating, the unhappy victim of perfidy was fettered, and in the dead of night, unknown to Elvira, Bianca, or Maratti, conveyed on board the caravel, which immediately set sail for Spain, and, after a tedious voyage, arrived at Don Manuel's castle, when the wretched Lorenzo was delivered with a letter to Garcias, to whom Elfridii announced the real name of the captive, with strict injunctions to keep it secret from every one, and to confine the unfortunate man closely in a dungeon apart from every individual. These injunctions were too congenial to the natural turpitude of Garcias not to be most scrupulously obeyed. Revenge was the highest gratification to his black heart, and he long had wished for an opportunity to wreck his vengeance upon the man who had secured the marchesa of Palermo from his machinations.

Elvira believed her husband was no more, and that his body was actually enclosed within the coffin she returned to Naples

with; as Elfridii had solemnly promised conte Vicenza and herself to destroy him by a subtile and expeditious poison; and he had assured her, the morning after he removed Lorenzo, that the duca expired in horrible convulsions, and that his disfigured corse was soldered up in the leaden coffin prepared for him. But it was by no means the plan of Elfridii to put a period to the life of Lorenzo, since the moment his victim ceased to breathe, his vengeance would end, and the power of torturing terminate. He had hitherto inflicted mental suffering alone, he now meant to add corporeal; and thus completely in his power, he doubted not but events would arise to give ample scope to cruelty: besides, by Lorenzo's existence, he held in his own hands a massy rock that would crush at once to atoms his vile associates, Polydore and Elvira, should they ever fail to supply with prodigality his rapacious demands.

CHAP. VIII.

Our hero was about two years old when he was stolen from his father's castle, and carried by Elfridii's emissary to be placed under the care of Francisco in Catalonia; and with him was delivered to the monk a letter from Elfridii, desiring him to take all possible care of the child; but conjuring him, by their mutual friendship, to conceal him from all their associates, but particularly from Don Manuel and conte Vicenza;—for much Elfridii feared Orlando's resemblance to his mother might betray his birth. From the child's account of himself he had little to apprehend, as his favourite attendant was an English girl, and from the moment Orlando could articulate he would speak no language but hers.

The arrival of Orlando threw Francisco into a most perplexing dilemma, as he knew not how to dispose of him. Had it been a

girl he could have sent her to a convent; for in arranging for the boy Theodore, before consigned to his care, he had experienced no small share of difficulty; and, would the same nurse undertake the care of this child, how could he conceal him from conte Vicenza when he visited his son? and should he seek out another nurse, it might lead the gossips in the neighbourhood to inquire how the holy hermit came by so many children to dispose of.

It was late at night when Orlando arrived at Francisco's habitation; and, much wearied by fatigue, terror, and weeping, he soon fell into a profound slumber upon a bench where the monk had placed him. The perplexity of Francisco's mind kept him awake all night; and at the dawn of day he arose from his pillow unrefreshed and undecided, when, in the midst of his provoking ruminations, his attention was arrested by the still sleeping infant. Never before were his feelings so powerfully interested. Such innocence, such helplessness, and heavenly beauty blended, he had never before contemplated. While gazing upon the lovely object of ad-

miration and perplexity, the child suddenly awoke; and by the dress of Francisco mistaking him for father Rinaldo, to whom he was much attached, sprung up, and with the endearing exclamation of "Father!" clung round Francisco's neck, imprinting a hundred kisses upon the monk's cheeks in all the wild joy of innocent affection, upon recognising, as he imagined, a person known to him, after being for so many days consigned to the care and appearance of total strangers.

Orlando's caresses found their immediate way to the heart of the monk, and awakened there a degree of pity and affection hitherto almost unknown. Francisco made a most aukward nurse; but he fondled the engaging cherub until he recollected food was necessary for him. He then spread the breakfast table, when, offering Orlando something to eat, it recalled to his mind so forcibly his favourite young attendant who used to feed him, that, pushing the fruit and milk from him, and bursting into tears, he sunk upon the floor; and there, hiding his face with his clasped hands, sobbed so pi-

teously, at intervals exclaiming, "Mary, Mary!—Father, dear father!" in such an affecting tone, Francisco was quite subdued; and taking him in his arms, pledged himself, by a most solemn oath, that he never should want a father while he existed; and soon, by Francisco's kindness and endearments, the poor child was pacified and took some nourishment.

The resemblance Orlando bore to Viola struck Francisco more than once; but the child's expressing himself in English only destroyed the rising suspicion of his being her son; and he concluded, that Viola being the most beautiful woman, and this the most beautiful child, he had ever beheld, had led his admiring fancy to pourtray a likeness.

At length the tolling of a distant matin bell reminded Francisco it was high time for his departure to his convent:—but what should he do with his lovely charge? He could not take him with him, and to leave him there alone would be a degree of cruelty he could not inflict. After much distressing deliberation, he at length, as the only alternative, determined to leave him

under the care of Iago, whose attendance Don Manuel often spared to him for hours together. Iago, therefore, he quickly summoned; and, giving a strict charge about child, stole off through the subterraneous passage.

While Francisco remained, Orlando had bestowed no attention upon Iago; but the moment he was alone with him, the aspect of the negro alarmed him. In vain did the good-natured old man exert himself to conciliate his favour, since, the more Orlando observed him, the more terrified he became; and at length screamed and cried so violently, that the kind-hearted Iago fled into the castle and brought the young Diego to him, as a playmate better suited to his fancy.

The engaging countenance of Diego instantly won the young stranger's favour. His manners dried Orlando's tears; and though Diego understood not one word Orlando said, they soon contrived to be on good terms; and they were engaged at high play—Diego upon all fours, scrambling about the room with Orlando mounted astride upon his back—when Don Manuel entered

to gratify his curiosity, which had been forcibly awakened on Diego's being summoned to Francisco's apartments, where none but himself, Elfridii, and Iago, had ever been suffered by the monk to go. Struck by the beauty and animation of the child, as he was lashing without ceremony the back of Diego, he demanded who that lovely creature was? but Iago could give him no satisfactory information.

Highly charmed and interested by the fascinating boy, Don Manuel took him in his arms and carried him into the castle to get sweetmeats and playthings for him. On entering the library, the child in a transport of joy struggled to get free, when, running about the room, exclaiming "Father! dear father!" and appearing to be anxiously looking for somebody, he suddenly burst into tears, with an air of disappointment ran towards Don Manuel, looking mournfully up in his face, and in a tone of resistless grief, pronounced—"My father." The interesting simplicity of the lovely boy affected Don Manuel almost to tears. He caught him once more in his arms, and wearied

himself to beguile the little stranger's sorrows until Francisco appeared.

It had never occurred to Francisco, until in the confessional at his convent, that it was possible for Don Manuel to see the child during his absence. It was therefore now his business to form some specious story to account for his appearance. In vain he racked his brain for one likely to impose upon the wary commandant; and almost wild with perplexity, he reached the hut where he had placed Theodore, and where necessity at length compelled him to go in quest of an asylum for his new charge. He found the nurse in the utmost consternation. Theodore, who had been from his birth an ill-thriving sickly child, had died the preceding night in fits. The woman was grieved the child had died under her care, but by no means sorry to get rid of her charge, whom she told Francisco had occasioned her neighbours to be very troublesome with impertinent inquiries, and had caused some awkward suspicions to fall even upon his reverence.

From this account Francisco knew it

would be vain to ask this woman to take care of another child; neither could he wish it since suspicion had in any shape glanced at him. However, while in the hut, it occurred to him that he might remove the fear of detection at home, by passing his lovely charge for the deceased Theodore, whom Don Manuel knew had been consigned to his protection, but had never seen; and since Elfridii so much wished for this child's concealment, he must approve a plan which would so effectually impose upon Don Manuel. Fully determined to adopt this measure, Francisco returned to his apartments; and highly did he congratulate himself upon his ready invention, when, directed by Iago, he found the child with Don Manuel, to whom he announced him as Theodore, whose nurse, a poor Englishwoman at Cadaques, had died the preceding day, when he was forced to take the child from her house, and bring him home; and now, totally at a loss how to dispose of him, he found himself in a most unpleasant dilemma.

"But why not let him remain where he is?" said Don Manuel, who in gazing upon

Orlando had traced in his fascinating countenance a strong resemblance to Viola, yet, strange to tell, without the smallest suspicion of his being her son. "We have surely apartments enough in this castle. Some proper person may be found among our female captives to attend him. He will be here secure from that observation which conte Vicenza wishes him to avoid; and he must undoubtedly be reared more healthfully here, than in the confines of a hut, or any abode of a common nurse."

"To the superior conveniences of the castle," returned Francisco, "there can be no doubt; but, Don Manuel, though you and I have chosen that path of life in which we walk, have I a right, betraying the trust reposed in me, to lead this innocent, this unconscious babe, to ultimate destruction. Neither you nor I are atheists, although each hour we live teems with our offences against that Being who made us. We have just cause to tremble for the great, the terrible day of judgment; but what dreadful torturing punishment would then await us did we there stand accused of blasting

this fair work. In this castle nothing but pernicious examples would surround him; and think you it possible he could escape contagion where every breath is contaminated."

"Heaven forbid," exclaimed Don Manuel, "that I should prove the means of leading this lovely innocent to destruction! In this castle I am convinced he might be reared without imbibing any of our contagious vices. Let those apartments contiguous to the library be sacred to him; let the south garden be appropriated to his use; let Iago be your domestic solely; and in your apartments prepare the dear child's food. Let the sweet cherub penetrate no further into our part of the castle than into the library. You, as he advances in years, can cultivate his understanding. I only ask to be admitted sometimes; and when his friends wish him to enter the world, we, if we then exist, may easily devise some means to prevent his betraying those secrets we wish to have concealed."

Although Francisco foresaw many future objections to this precipitately formed plan,

he readily acceded to its present adoption, having no alternative. The dungeons were immediately searched, but no one could be found in them that would answer for this child's attendant. Garcias was applied to, who, though cursing the troublesome brat, feared to offend Francisco; and recollecting that, in lately passing through an obscure village in Arragon, he had been hospitably entertained, during a storm, by a school-mistress who seemed like a mother to her young pupils, he led a band of ruffians to the peaceful dwelling of poor Teresa; and, in payment for her hospitality, cruelly tore her from every friend and connexion to attend the reputed Theodore.

CHAP. IX.

ELFRIDII shortly after arrived at the castle, and highly approved of Francisco's stratagem and subsequent arrangements, although they now found themselves obliged to extend the deception to conte Vicenza; and, in about a year after—contempt and obloquy having driven Polydore and the vile duchessa from Manfredonia to seek respect in France—Elvira, anxious to see her long alienated son, entreated to have him removed nearer to her; but this Polydore, ever shrinking from the glance of suspicion, would not consent to, but proposed taking her to see her boy in the castle of the Pyrenees, upon condition that she would accompany him thither alone, dispensing, on her journey, with the attendance of Bianca or any other domestic. To all this Elvira readily agreed, and submitted to having a bandage placed over her eyes in the forest; and in this hood-

winked state she was conveyed by Elfridii and Vicenza into the castle. She saw her supposed child, was struck with his resemblance to Viola; and Francisco, during the whole visit, trembled lest the mother's penetrating eye should discover that this was not her puny boy: but Theodore she had not seen since the hour of his birth, nor Orlando since he was eighteen months old; she had little recollection of either; and, believing our hero dead, the mother's vanity was too much elated at the perfect beauty of her supposed child to allow a doubt to enter her mind as to his identity. Neither could Polydore detect the cheat: he had never before beheld Orlando, and had not seen his own son since he was six months old. He now thought him most wonderfully improved; and attributed this amazing change to Teresa's surprising care, and the salubrious air of the castle.

During this short interview, believing Orlando to be her own boy, Elvira became so attached to him it was agony to think of parting; and, when forced away into the mysterious apartment, the violence of her

temper brought on an hysteric affection, which caused those shrieks and moans Iago imagined occasioned by the death-blow of the assassin, and which lessened on his ear as the duchessa was borne through one of the secret passages from that chamber. And to cure Teresa of a curiosity that might, on many occasions, prove an annoyance to them, Don Manuel and Garcias, by means of phosphorus and some fantastic habits, caused those dreadful appearances which left so incurable an impression of terror upon the poor woman's mind.

As Orlando advanced in age, he discovered strong symptoms of superior talents; and Francisco, a man of learning and tenderly attached to the boy, wished to have his understanding done every justice to. Nor could he bear to have this promising child confined either to the society of an old village school-mistress, or exposed to the pernicious examples existing in the castle. When at home he could certainly cultivate his ward's genius: but then he was seldom at home except at hours when the child's health required his being in bed; and so

much called out by his profession, he could not be the constant preceptor and guardian of a boy whose enterprising spirit would soon lead him to throw off the trammels of old Teresa. Perplexed and anxious beyond measure for the welfare of his darling, he mentioned the subject to Elfridii the next time that fiend visited the castle.

Elfridii heard him with the malign satisfaction of a dæmon; for these perplexities opened to him a mode for the execution of a further plan of vengeance upon Lorenzo, which no heart but that of a fiend could ever have conceived. He wished to awaken Lorenzo's affection for his son without his knowing him to be such; and then to strike his heart with a fell blow, the most direful a parent's heart could receive. He therefore appeared to enter into all Francisco's anxiety; and advised, could any man among the captives be found competent to the task, to appoint him preceptor to their little charge. Elfridii undertook to question Garcias upon the interesting subject. Lorenzo of course was elected; to whom Garcias offered kind treatment and emancipation

from a dungeon, on condition of his binding himself by a solemn oath to conceal his name, his rank, and his misfortunes, from every individual he might meet with during his captivity.

It must be supposed the wretched captive, who had groaned beneath a load of chains and mental misery in a noisome dungeon for almost two long years, should joyfully accede to such a proposal. There was now nothing in the world for Lorenzo to return to; all his misfortunes left him to wish for was a less rigorous confinement during the remainder of his days; and to announce himself to the individuals he might meet with in the castle, or talk to them upon the subject of his dire calamities, could be no gratification to a mind like his. Unhesitatingly therefore he took the oath; his fetters were knocked off; he was restored to the light of heaven, and introduced to Francisco under the simple appellation of signior Sebastian, as a preceptor for his ward.

It would have been impossible for the dearest friends of the unfortunate duca

now to recognise him, since he arose from the dungeon to all appearance full sixty years of age; so much had grief, cruel treatment, and confinement, taken from his youth. And Elfridii feared no detection, since the schemes which drew Vicenza to the Pyrenean castle seemed all completed, and there was then no prospect of his ever returning thither. In the apartments of Francisco, Lorenzo saw the lovely boy for whose sake he had been released from his dreadful prison. Orlando looked earnestly at the interesting figure before him; smiled sweetly up at him; and, in the melting voice of kindness and sympathy, entreated him to take some grapes Iago had just gathered for him. The voice, the smile, the earnest gaze, all struck upon the heart of Lorenzo; in all he traced Viola. He burst into tears, and bitterly he wept; but, believing that he had seen his own child expire, no idea of the possibility of this being his ever entered his agonised mind. He quickly, however, summoned back all his fortitude, apologised to Francisco for his weakness, and from that hour Orlando became an

object that called back some of his tenderest feelings to this world, and upon him his heart fondly rested.

From this period Elfridii carefully avoided that part of the castle where it was possible for him to be seen by Lorenzo, who never penetrated further than the library into the apartments of Don Manuel, who he had not the most remote suspicion was the identical Ambrosio to whom he attributed the most direful of his calamities; nor had Don Manuel the least idea of who this his interesting captive really was, since in that knowledge Elfridii and Garcias took care that none should participate with them. But though Lorenzo confined himself to the precincts of his prescribed apartments, his lively pupil often trespassed beyond bounds in quest of his two great friends and playmates, Thomas and Diego. Don Manuel and Francisco were at first extremely strict in the confinement of Orlando to his own private apartments; but soon (like many good intentions), as the novelty of the resolution wore away, they relaxed in their attention to it. As Orlando advanced in

years, and that exercise became necessary for him, his guardian was compelled to admit of his penetrating further into the castle grounds, and attend in the riding-school; when soon, from attentive observation, the anxious Lorenzo ceased to tremble for the effect of pernicious example upon the heart of his pupil, since with transport he saw the only impression vice made upon him was to increase his love for virtue. In these rambles about the castle, Orlando's detestation of Garcias took root; whose hatred to the supposed Theodore arose from his having an incorruptible heart, since the knowledge of whose child Orlando was had not been confided by Elfridii even to this his sworn co-adjutant.

When Orlando was in his seventh year, Don Manuel, in some of his piratical successes, took a rich prize bound from America to Cadiz, on board of which was an African boy, the adopted child of a Spaniard of some consequence in Spanish America, who had sent the boy, then eight years old, to Europe for his education. This child, named by his Spanish patron Hippo-

lyto, was remarkable for his uncommon beauty, and the elegant symmetry of his figure; and Francisco was so much struck by his appearance that he wished to save him from destruction, and requested him from Don Manuel that he might bring him up as a proper companion for the supposititious Theodore. The request was readily granted; and Hippolyto evinced such docility of mind and extent of talents, that Lorenzo undertook his education, both for the boy's own advantage and for the influence of emulation over the great capacity, but too often idle humours, of his beloved pupil. The power of emulation soon evinced itself, and both boys gained information with astonishing facility.

When Hippolyto had attained his sixteenth year, an elder brother of Francisco, an abbot of great learning, whose convent was at Naples, and who kept up a constant correspondence with Francisco as one of the holy fathers of San Francis at Cadaques, wrote to inform his brother that he was almost totally deprived of sight by cataracts; and entreated him to send him, if he could,

a well educated youth, who could bear the total confinement of a monastery, as a reader and secretary to him. This was an opportunity of amply providing for Hippolyto, which the good properties of Francisco's mind would not allow him to disregard. He well knew that his own death would be the final destruction of Hippolyto, who upon that event must inevitably become again the vassal of Don Manuel. He consulted the duca upon the important subject, who, though grieved to lose the society of Hippolyto for his dear boy, strongly advised, for the unfortunate African's sake, his being immediately sent to the good abbot. Francisco, therefore, using every precaution to prevent Hippolyto's having the power, should he ever have the inclination, to lead the officers of justice into the castle, dispatched the young man to his really amiable brother, accounting to Don Manuel for his absence by saying the Inquisition demanded his services; and Don Manuel dared to make no further inquiry.

The grief of Orlando upon losing his beloved companion was excessive; and to mo-

derate it in some degree, Francisco, who was all indulgence to him, brought Matilda from her convent to his own apartments, and there presented her to her father and her brother as Donna Matilda Almanza, a ward of his, whose society he would sometimes gratify Orlando with.

Matilda had been carefully nursed in the convent of Santa Maria, and received there all the education a number of illiterate nuns could give her. Her temper was ardent, her manners were lively, and her spirit was of that haughty nature which required the gentle but steady hand of maternal judgment to curb and soften, and to the voice of affection only would she bend. With feelings the most acute, she was tremblingly alive to every slight and every kindness, and for want of a judicious education the impulse of the moment was her only guide.

In his visits to Santa Maria, Francisco with concern saw how unfortunately for herself this lovely child had been trained: he spoke of his distress to Elfridii, who heard it with dæmonian joy. His diabolical plan was to unite the children of Lorenzo, and

then to rend at once the wretched father's heart by the maddening knowledge of their close affinity to him and to each other. He therefore, under the veil of deep interest for Matilda, advised Francisco to introduce her to Sebastian, who possessed all the powers of improving her understanding, and might find means to correct the foibles of her mind. During the frequent absenses of Don Manuel (Elfridii said) this plan might safely be pursued; and earnestly he wished it that success it seemed to promise, since he had future plans which he would now in confidence disclose to his dear Francisco. The amiable youth whom they had imposed upon Don Manuel for conte Vicenza's son was in fact the offspring of two dear friends of his (Elfridii's), who had, relying upon his honour and secresy, entrusted their child to his protection; that an ample fortune would in time be this youth's; and in compassion to the destitute state of poor Matilda, he had formed the project of uniting her, if possible, to their mutual charge.

Francisco was soon talked, by the wily Elfridii, into an anxious wish for the suc-

cess of this project: Matilda he therefore introduced to the society of Lorenzo and Orlando as often as the absence of Don Manuel made it prudent. From the curiosity of the sisters of Santa Maria he had nothing to apprehend, since he knew they would not dare to question their boarder relative to where an inquisitor and their confessor took her.

Orlando and Matilda soon conceived for each other all that pure and sincere affection that nature would have inspired had they been aware of their consanguinity. Lorenzo loved and admired the playful child, while with concern he saw the defects in her temper and of her education. With the gentle persuasive voice of kindness he set about amending the errors of each. Matilda respected and loved him, therefore every word he uttered made a lasting impression: she received lectures and lessons alike with gratitude from him, and soon evinced the most satisfactory improvement from both; and as to Francisco she also looked up with reverence and regard, she now knew no happiness equal to her visits to her guardian's habita-

tion. No wonder then that she persevered in her silence and secresy to her companions in the convent, since upon her secresy and silence Francisco informed her, the continuation of this great indulgence depended; and thus deriving her only improvement in the society of men, our reader will not wonder at her deficiency in those feminine graces so fascinating in woman.

Matilda repeated her clandestine visits for nearly two years, advancing daily in her important improvements, and in the affection of her father and brother, when Elfridii desired Francisco to inform the young pair that a marriage between them was agreed upon by their friends, and was shortly to take place.

Orlando heard the intelligence almost unmoved; he felt no emotion of repugnance, and none of satisfaction, except in the idea that it would insure him the constant society of his lively companion: but Matilda was almost wild with joy; she considered her marriage as her emancipation from the gloomy austerities of ignorance and a convent, and that she should now be enabled,

without interruption, to pursue her improvements in the loved society of Theodore, Sebastian, and Francisco.

The day for this dreadful union was at length appointed by the diabolical Elfridii, and the ceremony was to be performed by Francisco in the church belonging to the castle. The duca was sincerely grieved that the friends of these little more than children should determine thus early upon their union; he saw that, though they were firmly attached to each other, their attachment was not of that tender kind which he thought should accompany them to the hymeneal altar: but he had, he believed, no right, unsolicited, to offer an opinion upon the subject; he was silent, therefore, though anxious and concerned.

The day appointed for this horrible event drew near, to the malign gratification of the diabolical Elfridii; but the eye of Omnipotence was upon his purposes, and the angels of mercy were sent forth to save two innocent beings from a doom the most direful, and to lead the most sinful of sinners to repentance. A few evenings prior to this in-

tended marriage, a sudden and most tremendous thunder-storm prevented the return of Matilda from the habitation of her guardian to Santa Maria; no carriage could be brought there to convey her home; and the rain fell in such torrents, the peals of thunder were so violent, and the lightning so dreadful, that not a thought could be entertained of her quitting the castle that night: it was therefore agreed that she should occupy Orlando's chamber, and he a couch in Lorenzo's. The storm continuing with unabated terrors during the greater part of the night, it was late when the little party separated: but at an hour even unusually early Orlando left his couch in the morning; and unrefreshed, and with a mind most painfully disturbed, he entered the apartments of Francisco, when the too evident alteration in his whole appearance called forth the most eager inquiries of the monk relative to the cause. Anxious to unbosom himself to Francisco, yet fearing the laugh of ridicule for what might be deemed his superstitious weakness, he stood for some moments irresolute; but upon his being

more tenderly pressed to an explanation by the now terribly alarmed father, he hastened to speak.

"Believe me, my kind, my anxious friend, I am in perfect health," said he; "but"—Orlando paused in evident distress; at length he continued, while every line of his intelligent countenance pourtrayed horror—"how will you, with such a cultivated mind as you possess, contemn the poor simple boy for weakness, when I confess a dream has thus deranged me—has shaken my very soul with horror the most horrible?"

Before Francisco could reply, Matilda entered with faultering steps, her face wan and agitated, her beautiful eyes in mournful contemplation fixed upon the ground. Her appearance, too, alarmed Francisco—he caught her hand, it trembled, its death-chill startled him—"What ails my child?" he cried: "Have you too had a horrid dream?"

"Dream!" exclaimed Matilda in violent perturbation—"Oh, holy virgin! who could tell him that I had such a dream?" Then sinking into a chair, the horror her countenance betrayed was soon relieved by tears.

The agitated Orlando attempted to bring her a glass of water: but when drawn near to her he suddenly stopped, his feet seemed riveted to the spot, and his trembling hand let fall the glass; while Matilda with a shuddering motion drewback her chair, as if to fly from him.

"For mercy's sake, my children! tell me," cried the agitated monk, "what can have thus dreadfully deranged you both?"

"You have already, holy father, guessed the cause of my emotion," replied the sobbing Matilda. "A dream, or rather vision of my waking fancy, has taught me to shrink with horror from being united to Theodore."

"Oh! God omnipotent!" exclaimed Orlando, shaking with agitation: "speak, Matilda! instantly speak, and tell the substance of that vision."

"Kept so long waking by the storm last night," said she, "I was fatigued; and when at length I fell into a sleep, it was profound; when methought the moment of our union was arrived, and that we knelt before the altar in the castle-church—father Francisco

performing the ceremony—a tall, sullen, and malicious-looking man the only witness. The holy father read with marked impressive devotion; and when, at length, he solemnly charged us 'to declare if any cause existed why we should not be united,' the altar candles were suddenly extinguished, and the altar-piece, which was before a black marble tablet, as suddenly changed from an opaque to a transparent body."

Orlando's tremor increased to so violent a degree that he was forced to seat himself. Matilda continued—

"The marble at once assumed the appearance of clouds; and rapidly dissolving, while they emitted a bright lambent flame, a beautiful female figure, clad in the drapery of death, emerged from it, and, raising a long white veil, discovered the most celestial countenance I ever looked upon; while from her bosom issued a stream of blood which flowed to the stranger's feet, and there congealed: mournfully, but sweetly, she looked upon us, while I heard a voice, which seemed to come from heaven, loudly and

awfully pronounce —'Francisco, desist!—The children of the same parents cannot be united!'

"We fell prostrate on the ground—the phantom spoke—'Look up, my children! behold thy mother!—My son! wed not Matilda; she is thy sister!' Then turning to the stranger (oh so majestically!) impressively she said—'Elfridii, beware! Thy crimes are registered in heaven!' The stranger fell to the ground, the phantom vanished, and awful terror awoke me; when in my chamber I beheld, at my bed's foot, the same most beauteous phantom. I thought this still the delusion of my dream; I strove to rouse myself; I sat up in my bed, and still beheld her; a gentle ray of light gleamed around her; her hands were clasped as if invoking blessings on me, but her lips moved not; and yet distinctly I seemed to hear these words—'Matilda, wed not thy brother!' The phantom now gently receded, and, as she vanished from my sight, the same dreadful words seemed to be even more impressively repeated."

Orlando sunk upon his knees—"Matilda!" he cried, "kneel with me. And thou too, holy father, wilt thou not join with us in grateful thanksgiving to the omnipotent God of mercy, who sent his angel forth to save us from perdition? Even such was the purport of these visions, which have made an impression upon my mind such as Heaven alone could influence; and not the authority of Elfridii, who I now suppose is our mysterious guardian, nor even tortures, should now compel me to this union."

Francisco was shaken to the soul with awful horror. In no conversation with either of his wards had he allowed the name of Elfridii to transpire, yet in the most awful manner it had been revealed to them. Much as he loved Elfridii, he believed him capable of any crime. He dared not to doubt the object of these visions; and he was firmly convinced they were, by the interposition of divine Providence, to rescue two innocent beings from the malice of a dæmon. He joined them in thanksgiving, entreated them never to mention the name

of Elfridii to Sebastian or any other person, and determined to not delay disclosing to Elfridii these supernatural transactions in a manner most likely to wrest a confession from him.

CHAP. X.

As soon as possible Francisco conducted Matilda back to Santa Maria, where she was now solicitous to go; and upon his return he called at the apartments of Elfridii, low in the bosom of a cavern, where he then was staying secretly, and unknown to any of the castle inhabitants except Francisco and the old negro Iago. Francisco desired his friend to meet him at midnight in the nave of the church upon important business. Elfridii was true to the appointment. They met in the arcade: each carried a lamp, which rendered the gloom of this awful place more visible. They entered the nave together, and Francisco led the way to the altar; upon the steps of which he placed his light, and then seated himself upon the base of a monument before it. Elfridii followed his example. Then, look-

ing around, the sombre solemnity of the place, the hour, the sepulchral figures, all conspired to make his evil conscience whisper fear.

" Gassendi," said he in a voice composed of alarm and anger, " what need of meeting in such a place as this?"

" All places are alike to the just," returned Francisco solemnly: " besides, our business is of importance, and I wish our conversation only to be heard by Him from whom no secrets are concealed."

" Pshaw! Gassendi, do not affect the sanctified bombast of priestcraft to me who know you. Speak upon this mighty business quickly. I am in haste to quit this chill place, which makes me shake with cold."

Elfridii did tremble, but not from cold.

" My business is the important subject of the union of Theodore and Matilda, which you have determined shall take place at this very altar three days hence. Am I not right as to your determination?"

Elfridii bowed assent.

" Then to the foot of this very altar,

where you have resolved the vows of these young people shall be plighted, I have now summoned you; and at this awful hour, when nature sleeps, but nature's God observes you, to pause, reflect, consider if there is any cause existing, either moral or religious, to frown upon this union."

The dark countenance of Elfridii assumed an ashey hue; he changed his position several times, and, after many unsuccessful efforts, at length articulated in a voice of firmness—

"This new scheme of sanctity, Gassendi, has certainly deranged you. What can have awakened a suspicion of the existence of an obstacle to this union? I tell thee, pretended zealot, there *is* none, *can* be none, *shall* be none!" and he raised his voice to a tone of anger, to conceal some other emotions.

"Conte Elfridii, I would recommend less intemperance to you," replied Francisco calmly; "since, in defiance of your vehement assertions, I can produce an insurmountable one, in the young people's positive refusal ever to be united."

" D———n!" exclaimed Elfridii, gnashing his teeth, and striking his forehead with violence, " how dare they refuse? Who has taught them to dispute my authority, to disappoint my wishes?"

" Heaven," Francisco solemnly replied. " Heaven has revealed some dreadful truths to them; Heaven has disclosed an important secret; and Heaven's own agents told them they were too nearly allied by blood ever to be so by marriage."

Elfridii started from his seat, staggered back a few paces, and found support against the pillar of a colonnade. The eyes of Francisco were fixed upon him; he caught their scrutinising glance; and his surprise and fear now effervescing into rage and resentment, he darted forward and seized Francisco by the collar.

" Villain! impostor! even the Inquisition shall not now protect thee from my vengeance," exclaimed he in the most convulsive tones of passion. " Thou liest, Gassendi: there is no Heaven to reveal secrets; and this priestcraft shall not terrify me into disclosing what I choose not to impart."

Temper and right gave Francisco the advantage in strength: he disengaged himself from Elfridii's grasp, and, drawing forth a pistol, presented it at his competitor. Elfridii attempted to retreat.

"Stay, conte Elfridii," said Francisco: "you shall not go until you hear all I have to say, or by Heaven your life shall instantly be the forfeit!"

Elfridii no longer attempted to go, but supported himself against a pillar, while Francisco impressively related to him the dream or vision of Matilda.

The idea that Francisco had by some unforeseen mean developed the secret of Orlando's birth, by alarming Elfridii threw him off his guard, and drew from his emotions an almost positive, though tacit, confession of the truth. But the story of the vision restored at once his self-possession: he now believed suspicion of the fact had unaccountably stolen into the bosom of Francisco; and that this pretended dream was an artful fabrication of his own, to gain a confession by working upon his feelings. Elfridii was a determined atheift, and every

thing was held by him in the most sovereign contempt, that argued in favour of supernatural agency: instead, therefore, of the awful facts Francisco related having the desired effect, Elfridii treated them with derision, and laughed the relater to scorn.

But Francisco cared not for his ridicule or contempt; for, though in many instances an unequivocal libertine, he was a firm believer, and doubted not that, although Providence had seldom recourse to supernatural agency, its power over all things was omnipotent. But had he wanted further conviction of the relationship of his wards, Elfridii's emotions would have conveyed it; and he now resolved, if nothing less could stop the vile purposes of Elfridii, to call in even inquisitorial aid, to prevent an union which Heaven itself seemed to disapprove. Having now, however, no further business with a man whose infidelity left nothing to hope for from him, he wished him a good night; and these long sworn friends now for the first time parted angry and disgusted with each other.

Francisco returned to his apartments,

wishing he had firmness enough to break off for ever with Elfridii and all evil; while Elfridii pursued his way with a heart full of malice, indignation, and chagrin, at having thus unexpectedly an impediment placed in the way of his favourite project, by the whining superstition of a profligate priest. But although provoked and disconcerted, he resolved that even the life of Francisco should be sacrificed for the success of his diabolical scheme; and with his mind full of rage and a thousand contending evil passions, it was no great wonder that he should mistake his way, in a kind of labyrinth through which he had to pass.

Cursing Francisco, Fate, and his own stupidity, he wandered about some time in search of the right path, but in vain; and well as he was acquainted with the secrets of the castle, by having neglected the necessary observations as he passed he found himself completely perplexed. Now called to his own individual situation, his passions subsided in anxiety for himself. Fear again trembled in his bosom, and those superstitious feelings he scorned in Francisco seem-

ed now for the first time to assail him. At length, after having for some time traversed a long and winding passage, he thought he heard the sound of feet behind him. He turned in alarm, but no one could he see. This kind of investigation only increased his apprehensions; and when he again stepped forward, he fancied he saw something flit across his path. He stopped —he faltered—his heart beat fearfully; a death-cold hand seemed to grasp his; the lamp fell from his convulsive hold, and at once expired.

Now left in total darkness, all the horrors of his situation at once assailed him; but superstitious fears were above all the most direful to him. The mournful wind, which swept along the passage, seemed to murmur his name in the sadly melting tones of Viola's voice; and though there was not a ray of light, he fancied he beheld a blood-stained poniard floating in the air; while, as he groped about, and started at some imaginary touch of horror, the fire that flashed from his own eyes he conceived to be the dreadful gleam from the scorching eyes of fiends

and spectres. But still he went on, anxious, if possible, to escape from this most terrible place.

At length Elfridii reached the termination of this passage, and saw a ray of light beam down another that branched off from this. The light moved on. Elfridii, half breathless through hope and joy, pursued it. It glided on quicker than mortal motion could convey it. Elfridii ran forward, but soon lost sight of it. He trembled with agitation. Again the light gleamed much nearer than before. He darted forward, and caught the shadow of a human figure. The light again moved rapidly on. Elfridii followed it up a winding acclivity. It now seemed stationary; and the conte gained so much upon it, that he soon beheld an elegant female figure, light, tall, and airy, clothed in long flowing and almost transparent drapery, but closely veiled, bearing in one hand the light he had so long pursued. He had no time to lose in conjectures of where she came from; but the sight of her dissipated at once every superstitious apprehension.

Politely Elfridii called to her, informed her of his situation, and entreated leave to accompany her until he could ascertain exactly where he was. The lady stopped, bowed courteously, and motioned for his approach. As Elfridii advanced the lady pursued her way; but although much slower than before, the conte, with all his speed, could not overtake her. At length she suddenly stopped, and at that very door through which Elfridii had himself admitted Sanguinario to murder Viola. His blood froze in his veins, his heart sickened, and his superstitious fears returned with renovated force; yet from some undefinable impulse he rushed forward, as the phantom, raising her veil, discovered the beauteous countenance and bleeding bosom of the murdered Viola, at the same moment that the words in Matilda's dream—"Elfridii, beware! thy crimes are registered in heaven," seemed to strike with horror the most horrible on his appalled ears, and deprived of sense and motion he instantly fell on the ground.

Above half an hour elapsed before Elfridii recovered from his swoon, when he found

himself enveloped in total darkness: but the dreadful occurrence, which deprived him of respiration, left behind too forcible an impression ever to be forgotten. Remembering perfectly where he had fallen, he arose with much difficulty, from excess of tremor, and let himself through the secret door into that very chamber where he had caused Viola to be murdered, and where now her unhappy husband lay buried in profound sleep.

Wistfully Elfridii gazed around the chamber; a lamp was burning; he took it in his trembling hand; he approached the bed, to snatch a look at his injured friend: drops of cold dew stood on his forehead; his knees smote each other.

"Ah me," he cried, "how changed! And yet he sleeps serenely even on the very spot where his angel wife was butchered. Such favour finds the just; while I"—He shuddered at himself; no longer could he bear to view the friend whose happiness he had so inhumanly blasted: conviction's thorns were fast springing in his heart; he rushed from this fatal chamber to his own cell,

where, sinking on his couch, all the dreadful transactions of his life, all the awful occurrences of that night, passed in their horrid forms before him: he shuddered—he trembled. The hour of infidelity was past: he who was permitted to behold a form so long numbered with the dead, could he longer disbelieve? Heaven, to awake a sinner to repentance, had suffered one of its own seraphs to appear, to teach that truth he doubted. The sceptic was convinced: the crimes of his past life, the punishments of a future, all struck with horror's fellest force upon his soul: his senses fled before the dreadful retrospect, and dismayed reason was shaken from her throne.

For eight months Elfridii lay in all the phrensy of a strong delirium, attended most kindly and faithfully by Francisco and Iago, when the skill of Pedro (who before this time was dragged to the castle) was permitted by Heaven to make some impression upon the obstinacy of his disease. At the expiration of that tedious time he had short lucid intervals, which were chased away by the remembrance of his crimes. Pedro saw

that some dreadful guilt lay heavy upon the mind of this man, who was a perfect stranger to him: he presumed not to explore his secrets; but, in the character of a sensible humane man and exemplary Christian, effected as much for his patient's cure as he performed in his medical capacity. Judiciously he watched the opportunity of pouring balm into the wounded mind, by conversing upon the goodness of Him 'whose arms are ever open to receive the contrite penitent.' The lucid intervals of Elfridii now became longer, clearer, and more perfect; and Pedro supplied him from the library with every book that could assist his cure. At length Elfridii's recovery was judged complete, though debility of frame confined him to his couch five months after his phrensy had totally subsided; but when he arose from his couch, he arose one of the most lowly, sincere penitents that ever knelt before the throne of Mercy.

The moment Elfridii found his health re-established, he was anxious to set about effectually the important work of his eternal welfare; and the first step which he con-

sidered necessary towards making his peace (if possible) with his too justly offended Creator, was by making every restitution and atonement, now in his power, to those he had so inhumanly injured. But this was a work of much greater difficulty than he could have at first imagined. He had involved himself with knaves and villains of every gradation; and how to extricate himself from their toils, observation, and vengeance, so as effectually to restore liberty and their long usurped rights to the house of Manfredonia, he was wholly at a loss to devise. He was still too weak to undertake a journey to the see of Rome himself: but even were he not, the state in which he had so lately been must destroy all confidence in his prudence, and draw the eye of suspicion upon him; and all his former consociates trembling for his fidelity, could he reasonably hope to be allowed to reach the papal chair, while so many assassins stalked abroad, whose interest it would be to silence for ever a man who they might very well suppose no longer had reason for his guide, and whose death must cut off at once every

brightening prospect for the house of Manfredonia?

Neither was Lorenzo himself a proper embassador, since his absence from the castle must necessarily be discovered, and his death the inevitable consequence. Besides, he feared an interview with Lorenzo, at that time, would shake his just restored reason once more from its seat; and he made it a question, "Whether it would not be less cruel to allow the duca to remain in that unhappy state of mind which years of habit had rendered, if not easy, at least familiar to him, than to awaken new affections, new interests, new hopes, new fears, while uncertain how to terminate them?" Not to any one, therefore, dared he at present confide this consequential mission, no not even to Francisco, who he knew when his interest, much less his life, was at stake was not always to be depended upon. Beside, new affections had lately been aroused in Gassendi's breast, to bind him to Don Manuel. A recent discovery had been made by the arrival of a female whom Garcias had made captive. She seemed old, in much

misery, and carried in her side a mortal wound inflicted by one of his sanguinary companions. In the castle she saw Don Manuel, and claimed him for her son; and her authentic little history discovered him to be the offspring of the unhallowed priest Francisco Gassendi and a beautiful strolling actress of Naples. The boy, deserted by his father, was left solely to the care of his itinerant mother, one of whose lovers, a Spanish grandee, took care of the education of her son, and afterwards provided for him in the Spanish fleet. From that moment Ambrosio thought no more of his mother, whose situation tarnished the lustre of his growing fame. Her lovers decreased with her beauty; her latter days were marked by poverty and wretchedness; and from one of her undutiful son's own emissaries she received her death-wound, and at length expired in the arms of her, at that moment, repentant son.

For many reasons this anecdote was kept as secret as possible in the castle: but Francisco, while under the influence of his first emotions, revealed it to Elfridii, who now

could not hope the father would take part in any thing that could threaten the destruction of his son. Upon Orlando himself, therefore, all his hopes now rested: he well knew conte Vicenza, believing this boy his own, meant at no very distant period to introduce him to the world as his nephew.

Impatiently now Elfridii looked forward to that moment, resolving not to destroy the delusion that bound Polydore to Orlando, and doubted not but in their train to pass unmolested to Paris, when he would place all the important discoveries in proper hands, restore Lorenzo to the world, confess his own dreadful crimes, lay down his head upon the scaffold, and joyfully submit to the stroke of the executioner, in some expiation of his guilt. But still trembling for the instability of human life and human views, he hastened to make a faithful narrative of his own crimes, and of the innocent Viola's injuries. He collected all the letters which he had intercepted, particularly that entrusted to the ill-fated Bernardo—copies of all Elvira's and Vicenza's forgeries—the certificate of Matilda's birth, which he had got

from Francisco—with every paper, trinket, and circumstance likely to substantiate facts after his demise; and packing them up together in a small iron box, he buried it by Viola's monument, which Don Manuel had erected. Showing the spot to the faithful Iago, he made him promise, should he (Elfridii) die before young Theodore left the castle, to conduct the young man to that spot, dig up the box before him, give it into his own hands, with solemn injunctions to conceal it from the knowledge of every individual belonging to the castle, and never but with life to part from it, until he should deliver it into the hands of the reigning pontiff.

This important matter being adjusted as well as circumstances would admit of, Elfridii began his life of penance. A small pyramidical chamber in the caverns, which had once been a Moorish mausoleum, he fixed on for his dwelling, apart from every living mortal save the wretched Sanguinario, whom to visit often he made part of his penance, to contemplate that misery he had assisted to occasion. Not far distant was

the grave of Viola; and another reason he had for choosing that place for his abode was, its proximity to the cavern into which the sanguinary banditti precipitated, through a hole hid amongst the underwood, the bodies of those they murdered in the forest. To contemplate the dead, to compose their corses decently, and to pile them up in respectable order, was now part of this wretched penitent's employment.

By the grave of Viola, or in this dreadful dormitory of the murdered, Elfridii now chiefly passed his nights, recounting his offences, and weeping over his past crimes. Every penance he had heard or read of, every pain and mortification the angry monk had ever sentenced a trembling penitent to endure, Elfridii inflicted upon himself. Stripes and wounds, hunger and thirst, praying and watching, by turns occupied his time. Often for a whole day and night would he abstain from food; then commanding Iago to bring him the choicest viands money could procure, such as had been wont to delight his sensual appetite, he would look on them, smell them, order them away, and appease

his craving hunger with a mouldy crust and water.

No longer did a bed refresh his exhausted frame; the cold earth, with some newly-butchered body for his pillow, or the base of Viola's tomb, was his night's resting place. By day he shunned society, and passed it in tears, prayers, and dreadful retrospection of time gone by; or in wandering to those spots which could best remind him of his crimes. Day after day, and month after month, were spent by Elfridii in this shocking course of punishment, seen only by Iago or Francisco, and often in his wanderings giving terror to the credulous Teresa, or some easily alarmed captive—the departure of Orlando still anxiously watched for by him—though at length it took place without the knowledge of this wretched man.

CHAP. XI.

WHEN that time arrived which conte Vicenza had fixed upon to introduce his supposed son into the world, Garcias, trembling lest Theodore's attachment to his preceptor might, by some unforeseen means, lead the unfortunate Lorenzo at length to liberty, and the whole community, in consequence, to destruction, impressively represented the rashness of leaving the lives of so many brave men at the mercy of a thoughtless youth, who might be won to their destruction by his attachment to individuals in the castle. Conte Vicenza was now in the neighbourhood *incog.*, at the house of a consociate, in the Bay of Roses. His opinion exactly coinciding with that of Garcias, it was determined upon between them, that our hero should be conveyed away in the manner most likely to create a persuasion of his death, so to put a stop to the inquiries of

any one after him, and, by their manœuvres, to cut off the possibility of his ever finding his way back to the castle.

Don Manuel was soon won over to their schemes, who undertook to reconcile Francisco to the prudence of their measures. But this was a task much more difficult than they imagined. Sincere esteem for the supposed Sebastian, and affection for his ward Matilda, would not allow him to bear easily the idea of afflicting them; nor could his own attachment to the youth brook the thought of seeing him no more; and in the first impulse of his feelings he had nearly (to destroy the claims of Polydore) confessed the death of Theodore, and the imposition he had practised. But a moment's reflexion convinced him how replete with dangers to his beloved protegé would be such a discovery, and he continued in that path of deception the young man's real guardian, Elfridii, had formerly urged him to persevere in; and now at length, by the persuasive rhetoric of Don Manuel, he was led not to oppose the scheme of Garcias. A band, therefore, of armed ruffians were deputed to act with

Garcias in the seizure of the unwary Orlando, whom they dragged to one of the secret prisons, where they bound him, and left him to reflexions of no very pleasant nature.

At midnight Francisco and Don Manuel entered his cell. His apprehensions vanished upon seeing them, but not the wonder which the occurrences of the day had awakened. They each approached him with affection; and Don Manuel, knocking off his fetters, spoke with all that insinuating suavity of manners he was so famed for. He apologised for the treatment Orlando had that day experienced, by candidly confessing the real motive which actuated it. "Your friends," he continued, have demanded you, and you have lived too long among us not to be well aware of the precautions necessary for us to take when we permit any but our own community to quit our habitation. Your unpleasant treatment, I am concerned to add, is not yet past. You must, my young friend, submit to being hoodwinked, while you are conducted from this place to the carriage which is waiting to convey you to your uncle at Madrid.

Any man but you, conte Theodore, I would bind by solemn oaths to secrecy before I suffered him to depart; but in your honour and generosity I dare confide my life. Farewel, dear youth! I am conscious I can claim no place in your esteem, but you live in mine; and wherever fate may call you, believe me you will not find a truer friend than I am."

Orlando was much affected. Affectionately he pressed Don Manuel's hand, while with streaming eyes he addressed Francisco—

"Oh! tell me, holy man," he cried, "my father! guardian! friend! who is it that claims me? Who is it who thus cruelly tears me from every tender tie I have been suffered to form upon earth? Who thus drags me, forlorn and destitute, into a world where the bosom of friendship or affection is not for me to rest upon?"

"I," said Francisco, visibly subdued, "I shall conduct you to the arms of your uncle, conte Vicenza, a man of honour and consequence, whom in my holy character I formed a friendship with. He has authorised me to

inform you, that you are the offspring of his only sister and an English gentleman, who, marrying contrary to the approbation of their respective families, were discarded by both. Your father shortly died—it is supposed, of a broken heart. Your mother did not long survive him. You fell to the care of conte Vicenza, who entrusted you to my care, with earnest entreaties to guard you from the malice of your mother's vindictive family; and although your uncle was unacquainted with my connexions here, his agent and most favoured friend, conte Elfridii, was not, and by his advice your uncle gave you to my protection. Your unnatural grandsire is now no more; and as apprehension no longer exists for your safety, conte Vicenza calls you into the world as his intended heir; and, justly hating the name you bear, has, by his interest in Italy, obtained nobility for you; and henceforth you are to assume, and be known only by, the title o conte di Urbino."

"These are brilliant prospects, certainly," returned Orlando, "alluring to a youthful mind: but gladly, oh, how gladly would

I forego them for the society of those I love! The moment I go hence, my communication with this castle is cut off for ever. No more must I behold the friends I love within its walls. What then avails the kindness I have here received from my infancy? Only to awaken affections which, by one fatal stroke, must rend my heart for ever. Oh! holy Francisco, must I then indeed no more behold you, and my beloved young companion,—my poor old nurse,—Diego, Thomas, Don Manuel too, and poor Iago,—and, oh, grief unutterable, my dear preceptor? O merciful God! tear me not from him; for, could I think that I should no more behold Sebastian, my heart would break at once."

Orlando fell on his face upon the dungeon bed, and sobbed aloud. Don Manuel and his father were both sensibly affected, and a few moments elapsed in silence. Orlando at length raised his head, and in a voice and with a manner of impressive supplication said:—

"By all that compassion you have hitherto evinced for me, by that affection I know you bear me, I entreat, I implore you, dear and

holy father, to go alone to conte Vicenza; tell him that I am penetrated by his kindness to me; assure him I have not an ungrateful heart; but that Sebastian, to whom I owe every mental good I possess, is far advanced in life, and is afflicted; that he has not a comfort under heaven but me; and my good uncle will not let me leave him—surely, surely not! In this dungeon will I remain till you return. Either prevail for Sebastian to accompany me, or for me to remain in the castle with him till death divides us. Sooner would I forego every smiling prospect of my future life than grieve Sebastian."

There was something in the tone of Orlando's voice, in his look, his manner, at that moment, which found an instant passport into that part of Don Manuel's heart where all his dormant goodness lay. He clasped Orlando with paternal tenderness to his breast, and was about to promise this faithful copy of Viola all he wished for, when the savage Garcias and his myrmidons rushed in. The supplications of Orlando were no more attended to. This ruthless interposition closed the gates of pity in Don

Manuel's breast. Orlando was instantly hoodwinked, and, in despite of every effort, was borne from the dungeon into the forest, where a carriage waited, which, with an escort of Don Manuel's troops, conveyed our hero and Francisco as quickly as possible to the metropolis, where conte Vicenza was.

Polydore was at this period on a visit to Don Antonio Henriquez Fernando Gaspardo de Almanzara, a grandee of high reputation, who then bore an honourable employment under the crown: nevertheless, he was a particular friend of conte Vicenza's, and a member of the predacious society. Polydore had cogent reasons for not choosing that our hero should at this time either remain at the Pyrenean castle or remove to France: he therefore arranged for his residing some time at Madrid, under the specious pretence that, as it was to appear he had received his education in Spain, it was necessary for him to know the manners of polished life in that country; and in the metropolis it was Polydore's intention he should remain some time under the auspices of Don Antonio, from whose house he was to make occasional

excursions to Toledo, at the university of which his name had been some time enrolled. Of the polish of a court, however, Orlando wanted nothing. Nature, and one of the most finished gentlemen the continent had ever boasted, made him all the man of real elegance could wish to be: but, as he was to be separated from those he loved, he cared not whether he was exiled to Paris or Madrid.

Conte Vicenza remained only a few days at Madrid after the arrival of Orlando. Francisco departed even sooner, laden with letters, books, trinkets, and a thousand kind remembrances, from the affectionate Orlando to those beloved friends he left in Catalonia, who he knew not were to be led to believe him dead. However, Francisco's affection to Sebastian and Matilda made him undeceive them; and while our hero continued at Madrid, Gassendi regularly made that metropolis a visit every three months, bringing with him intelligence of Orlando's friends—but no letters from Sebastian, who considered corresponding with any person out of the castle an infringement of his oath. But though Orlando received

such constant information relative to those he loved, he yet pined in secret for the sorrow his absence must occasion to them: and notwithstanding Don Antonio's utmost exertions to amuse this fascinating young stranger, all was vain; his sadness was invincible; and in the gayest circles the captivity of Sebastian, the still undecided relationship between him and the cloister-entombed Matilda, would still occupy his tortured mind, and rob him of mirth; of more—of peace.

No man Orlando now conversed with was so wise, so good, so polished, as Sebastian; no woman he saw so lovely, so interesting, as Matilda. But, insensible as Orlando was to the merits of the Madrid belles, they were by no means so little susceptible of his. Many a bright eye ogled and languished in vain; but at length the little blind urchin, enraged at his thus braving every attack of wit and beauty, determined to send him where he should find that Cupid's power was not always to be slighted.

Don Antonio was an unmarried man, and had a ward so beautiful, so accomplished,

so amiable, and withal so rich, that he had long determined to make her his wife: and she had never discovered any discouraging symptoms, until some time after the arrival of Orlando at Madrid, when Donna Almeira's heart told her tales the jealous eye of Don Antonio soon developed; who, trembling at the increasing influence of this most formidable young man, at length resolved to remove him far from the too susceptible Almeira; and therefore, pretending business at Paris, requested Orlando to accompany him thither. The brilliant charms of Donna Almeira had only excited common admiration and esteem in the breast of Orlando, and he felt no repugnance in acceding to Don Antonio's request. In little more than a year, then, after Orlando's removal from the Pyrenean castle he arrived at the château de Vicenza, near Versailles; when Don Antonio candidly confessed to Polydore the reason of his conduct, and Orlando was suffered to remain at the château, although conte Vicenza had rather at that period have received any other man in existence for his guest.

Our reader is already acquainted with the profligacy of conte Vicenza, and of the daring insult he offered to the purity of our heroine, in the first pages of these volumes. His scheme of villany against her he had long had in contemplation. The presence of her brother had restrained his licentiousness; and, as he rightly judged he should find Victoria no easy prey, he had some vague idea of making Don Manuel's castle subservient to his diabolical design. The removal of Orlando from it was therefore necessary, since he might prove too dangerous a rival; and at all events, in extricating the innocent from the toils of the wicked, his virtues, courage, and influence over Francisco were to be apprehended.

At the moment of Orlando's arrival at the château, conte Vicenza and the vile Garcias were deeply scheming against our heroine. Leopold's enmity to Clementina had never been extinguished; and to wreak his dire vengeance and hatred upon her offspring, was a rich banquet his vindictive heart panted to be gorged with. The extravagance of Polydore and Elvira, with all their satellites,

swallowed up almost the whole of the immense possessions of Manfredonia: the estates were dismembered, mortgaged, sold; and little was now remaining to pamper prodigality with. The estates of Ariosto were all entailed upon Victoria in case of her brother's dying without issue. Alphonso's long minority had made a considerable accumulation of wealth, and Garcias started the idea of Polydore's marrying Victoria. The duchessa was to be terrified into their schemes, and divorced. In the castle of Don Manuel, Victoria's fears were to be worked upon to teach her compliance; and Alphonso, by a well-directed shot, was to be slain in the field of battle, where the war with Britain promised soon to call him. This horrible plot was in agitation when Orlando appeared in France, and his presence only hastened its execution.

Elvira, believing Orlando to be her son, soon evinced the utmost maternal fondness for him; while the object of the less pure affections of this licentious woman was comte de Montfort, a remarkably handsome young Frenchman, who was amongst the

number of Victoria's discarded suitors; but who, unlike his fellow-sufferers, would take no refusal, although his perseverance inflicted pain upon the object he professed to love, and often taught even the highly polished, amiable, and sweet-tempered Victoria to evince that contempt her bosom cherished for him. Still Elvira encouraged his visits, and fed him with delusive hopes, to induce his attendance upon and attentions to herself; for she doubted not the influence of her blandishments and charms (for still was she beautiful to an astonishing degree) would at length win this volatile and not very sensible young man to herself.

Upon Orlando's arrival at the château de Vicenza, comte de Montfort attached himself almost wholly to him, as, from his extreme dejection, the poor inamorato conceived our hero to be, like himself, an unsuccessful votary of the blind urchin. Sure, therefore, of the sweet sympathy of tender sentimentalists, he unbosomed himself to Orlando, and told him the history of his unsuccessful love, and resolution still to persevere in addressing the flinty-hearted Victo-

ria; when, to his utter amazement, instead of the soothing commiseration of his sympathising auditor, he received his most severe censure for unmanly and ungenerous conduct.

"You acknowledge," said Orlando, "that lady Victoria has never fed, by a single ray of hope, the flame you cherish; but, on the contrary, has taken every pains to convince you that she never will be yours. Why, then, are you so ungenerous, I may say pusillanimous, to persecute her thus for what she cannot grant? You must know, that nothing can be more distressing to an ingenuous mind than supplications for what it must deny; and, believe me, a woman of true delicacy must shrink from the sensualist, who only thinks of his own happiness. You know that your passion cannot be returned: it is therefore now your part to exert the energies of your mind, and no longer torture, by your unmanly persecution, the being you profess to love; and, though you cannot gain her tenderest affections, deserve at least a place in her esteem."

De Montfort considered both the opinions

and advice of Orlando entirely interested, arising from his own views upon lady Victoria; and though half angry, and quite jealous, he could not deny himself the pleasure of talking to him of her whenever he had an opportunity: and Orlando, clearly perceiving the comte's suspicions, would sometimes playfully beguile his own sadness, by alarming the desponding yet persevering lover by declarations of "speedily asserting his right, as conte Vicenza's nephew, to an introduction to the duchessa's niece."

Although still heart-whole, no one was a greater admirer of beauty than Orlando, nor could any one long more impatiently than he did to behold Victoria, whose personal graces he had heard so universally admired, and of whose mental perfections he had been convinced, by having accidentally obtained the knowledge of several beautiful and affecting anecdotes, wherein the virtues of her heart were most strikingly pourtrayed; yet such an intention as that he bantered comte de Montfort with, was one of the last things upon earth he would have attempted. He felt himself a dependent; and his indig-

nant soul told him the duchessa ought, unsolicited, to introduce Victoria to the nephew of her husband. The thought, therefore, which engaged his mind more than projects to behold Victoria, was how to get into a profession to obtain for himself the blessing of mental liberty, in a state of independence, since he had not made his observations long at the château before his soul recoiled from the idea of dependence upon conte Vicenza, and from the debasement of being a great man's satellite. His heart panted for the army; and he at length so far did violence to his feelings, which taught him to revolt from owing an obligation to his supposed uncle, as to request him to obtain a commission for him, fully resolved, if his request was not most graciously complied with, to enter immediately as a volunteer in the French service: but his wish was too congenial to conte Vicenza's not to be instantly attended to. The commission was directly applied for, and would have been as immediately granted, only for the machinations of Elvira, who could not brook the idea of her son

entering into so dangerous a profession; and by her manœuvres both the conte and Orlando were completelydeceived, by the secretary of war, with plausible pretences of delay.

Orlando had the duchessa's permission to visit her every morning in her own apartments, but at the hours in which Victoria was engaged with her masters; and one day, as he was hastening to pay his morning compliments to Elvira, he saw Bianca about to close a door through which she had come from Victoria's apartments, and at the same moment the sound of the most melodious voice he had ever heard struck upon his ears. He motioned to Bianca not to shut up the fascinating sounds; when that worldly-minded woman, for once actuated by a laudable motive, wishing to serve her brother-in-law, who was Victoria's singing-master, by gaining Orlando's approbation for him, offered to admit him into the anti-room, where he could distinctly hear the enchanting warbler.

Our reader can easily suppose how readily Orlando acceded to the obliging pro-

position. He heard Victoria sing to the greatest advantage: he lost not a single tone, and was fascinated. The moment for signora Bernini's departure was at hand. Bianca apprised Orlando of it, but he heard her not: entranced he listened, the sounds still vibrating on his ears, until roused by a rough shake of the arm from the alarmed Bianca.

"Conte di Urbino must immediately depart," said she; "for I should be ruined was it discovered that I had brought his lordship hither."

Orlando instantly moved away, though his soul seemed still to linger there, and he uttered not a syllable until arrived at the door leading to the duchessa's apartments; when, suddenly turning to Bianca,

"Good Bianca," said he, "cannot you befriend me, and obtain for me even one glance at lady Victoria?"

"The seclusion lady Victoria now lives in," replied Bianca, "utterly destroys the possibility of my having the happiness to oblige conte di Urbino. She even now goes not to church; a priest attends in her

apartments for her religious duties, and her time for taking exercise is when my lord and lady are engaged with their guests at dinner."

"Heavens!" exclaimed Orlando, "and can ill health compel such seclusion? Her voice proclaims no indisposition of her frame."

Bianca shook her head with a mysterious signification, and, opening the door into the duchessa's dressing-room, prevented all further inquiry.

From this moment the voice of Victoria, with her mysterious retirement, mingled with every thought of Orlando: worlds would he have given for an explanation of that mystery, but not for worlds would he question the domestics further, although he believed his own valet Hugo was sufficiently communicative for the purpose.

CHAP. XI.

At length there was to be a splendid ball at the château, given by the duchessa as a compliment to the nephew of her husband: and while this pretended nephew was adonising for the occasion, Montfort entered his dressing-room in terrible dudgeon with Elvira for not insisting upon Victoria's gracing the ball-room with her presence; and so mortified and enraged was he, that he talked himself into a thousand jealous absurdities, finally attributing the duchessa's strange seclusion of her niece entirely to her project for uniting her to conte di Urbino, for whom she evinced so great a degree of partiality.

At first Orlando strove to reason Montfort out of his absurdity; but finding that a vain attempt, he laughed at the angry lover, and amused himself by mock acknowledgments "for discovering thus kindly

to him the splendid alliance the duchessa was so secretly and generously projecting for him; and that now his eyes were opened to this flattering prospect, he would no longer rein-in his impatience, but instantly set about inventing means to obtain a view of his lovely intended."

Montfort, in dismay and alarm, flew to Elvira to plead again his cause; while Hugo, believing his master serious, determined to prove himself a prompt and valuable agent, by contriving as speedily as possible to gratify his master with a view of her, whom poor Hugo thought, with comte de Montfort, the paragon of human excellence and beauty.

In the ball-room was a most brilliant assemblage of beauty; and the love-stricken Montfort danced, flirted, ogled, distributed his attentions, and displayed his elegant person with as much spirit and perseverance as any heart-whole man in company.

Orlando danced, conversed, admired, and was himself more than admired: but in the midst of this splendid scene of hila-

rity, Sebastian in captivity, Matilda immured in a convent's gloom, Victoria in ill-health (for such was the reason still assigned by Elvira for her not appearing), all struck upon his imagination; and his saddening heart now led his melancholy steps to a room far distant from the merry dance. Here he had not long enjoyed his mournful contemplations, when the watchful Hugo whispered to him that he had just learned lady Victoria's intention of walking through the colonnade, when the guests were seated at supper, to view the company and the decorations; and that at the termination of the colonnade was a dark grotto, close to the only window through which the banqueting room could be advantageously viewed, in which he might securely conceal himself while lady Victoria remained.

This was an opportunity for gratifying an anxious wish too favourable to be neglected. Orlando returned to the company, and watched an auspicious moment to escape, when the guests were arranging themselves at the banquet. In perfect secrecy Hugo conducted him to the grotto;

where he had not long concealed himself when she whom Heaven had formed to reward his virtues, and constitute his happiness, first appeared to him.

Along the colonnade Victoria lightly bounded, Farinelli and Roselia swiftly following. Her movement evinced nothing of an invalid: her light airy step proclaimed more of a sylph or wood-nymph, a darling of Hebe and the Graces. Victoria's impatience brought her first to the window contiguous to Orlando's ambuscade. The light from the banqueting-room gleamed sufficiently upon her face to show it perfectly to her attentive observer. She looked earnestly into the room, and then drew back a few paces to give her companions the same advantage she had enjoyed. After some moments' contemplation of the gay scene, Victoria broke silence in a soft, cautious tone, but so articulate that Orlando lost not one word.

"Look, dearest madam, at my insidious uncle; how amiable he looks! how sweetly he now smiles upon that lovely girl! Ah,

conte, conte! how man can smile, and smile, and be a villain!—Who could behold his ingenuous countenance, and conceive such a licentious heart had shelter in his bosom!"

She paused—the most interesting pensiveness stole over her animated face. At length she proceeded:—"Alas! my friend, and is it surely possible that he whom from my earliest days I loved and reverenced with the affection and duty of a child could really have meditated my destruction?"—An unbidden tear strayed down her lovely cheek, which Ursuline with maternal tenderness kissed away; and the venerable Ursuline was at that moment the only being upon earth whom Orlando envied. A sudden sound of mirth called Victoria's attention to another part of the room.

"Ah!" she exclaimed, "there are the dear D'Harcourts!—Happy girls! But for my naughty uncle I should not be here stealing a peep at them: I should be with them, and one of the gayest of the gay."

"And yet," said Ursuline gravely, "my

sweet child must ever surely feel the spot where Virtue has placed her the most attractive."

Victoria deeply blushed. "Forgive," she cried, "this little flight of levity upon seeing the alluring mirth of my innocent young friends. Assuredly I do not regret the choice my heart has made; nor can your pupil ever find that path gloomy which Virtue guides, or that spot attractive where she is not."

Ursuline smiled approbation, and Victoria's vivacity returned.

"Roselia," said she, "there are several handsome strangers among the men: pray which of them is conte di Urbino?"

"I have been looking for his lordship some time," replied Roselia, "but cannot see him anywhere."

"Look again," said Victoria, who, standing behind her, playfully threw her fingers across Roselia's eyes in the form of spectacles; "look again, and through a pair of spectacles you cannot choose but see him."

"Indeed he is not there," said Roselia.

"Come, describe your Adonis to me; and as I am taller than you, perhaps I may be able to find him out."

"That lady Victoria could readily do without my description, were he there, since he as much surpasses the rest of mankind in beauty and elegance as she does every——"

Victoria here put her hands upon Roselia's mouth, and laughing said, "Do you not think, madam, that poor Roselia is in love, and has lost with her heart the faculty of seeing? Or is it, Rosa, that you *have been* in love, and now, recovered from that desperate malady, can nowhere see a being equal to the paragon your infatuated fancy had pourtrayed? But come, let me see if I cannot trace out this nonpareil." And now, with smiling, playful archness, Victoria scanned over all the male strangers within her view, rejecting the idea of each, as she criticised him, being the irresistible Urbino, by finding, from her mock investigation, some ludicrous blemish in face or figure ungenial to the deity of Roselia's idolatry.

"Alas!" she at length cried, "he too

surely is not among them! But where can the teasing truant be? Nothing but the machinations of that odious little Cupid could have played me such a provoking trick! Depend upon it, Roselia, your conte di Paragon is no longer heart-whole; and that, poor languishing drone, he has got into some sly corner out of our sight, either to make love to, or contemplate the perfections of, his adorable. Oh! if it is so, may the blind urchin avenge my bitter disappointment upon them both! May Urbino's heart be perforated through and through! and may the abominable nymph fall as many fathoms deep in love with him as I am now overwhelmed with mortification at my disappointment! For, to confess the honest truth, curiosity brought me hither solely to see that interesting though unfortunate young man, whom cruel destiny has thrown upon the protection of conte di Vicenza."

The heart of Orlando almost bounded from its seat with different emotions; but still he contrived to conceal his feelings and himself from observation, while with pensive eagerness Victoria anxiously

looked through the supper-room in search of him.

" So, then, he really is not to be found; and all I have got by this expedition is the horrid mortification of finding that comte de Montfort will not die for me. See how provokingly gay the apostate seems, and what indefatigable pains he takes to look irresistible! Surely, if I longer contemplate his fascinations, I shall at last be vanquished." Victoria now throwing into her face a ludicrous expression of admiration, Ursuline, in laughing, strove to suppress a cough; and the speaking countenance of Victoria instantly changed from the burlesque to the most tender solicitude.

" Ah, Heaven!" she exclaimed, " my more than mother, you have got cold in your kind indulgence to my foolish wish. We will go in immediately."

" No," said Ursuline; " I have not got cold, my sweet apprehensive child. Stay and amuse yourself a little longer."

" No, not for worlds, now the idea of your suffering from the night air is awakened. On the wings of affection shall you

now be borne to your chamber. Come, dear Roselia, and we will fly away with her from danger." And throwing one of her beautiful arms playfully round Ursuline, and Roselia doing the same, they affectionately hurried her along the colonnade. Orlando stood gazing after Victoria while she appeared in view; and when she was no longer to be seen, he softly articulated—

"Yes, most fascinating Victoria! part of your wish is realised. My heart is perforated through and through; and were the rest to be fulfilled, Heaven could not grant more happiness to mortal." Slowly he emerged from his place of concealment, and returned to the company with the image of Victoria fixed for ever in his heart, and with every horror floating in his mind of the principles of him whom he thought Nature commanded him to venerate; but whom the words of our heroine, with his own prior observations, taught him to abhor: and to owe an obligation to this man was henceforth torture to his virtuous mind.

The fascinating Victoria was now almost the unrivalled subject of Orlando's thoughts.

To reside in the same house with her, and not endeavour again to see her, he found impossible. Hugo had in the first instance so successfully managed for him, that he no longer forbore to apply to him for assistance; and innumerable were the stratagems the ingenious valet devised for his master's obtaining views of Victoria without her being likely to discover him; for, as Orlando was convinced his uncle and the duchessa had some reasons for not choosing to make him known to Victoria, his pride and rectitude forbade his intruding conte di Urbino upon her knowledge or observation.

But while Orlando believed the manœuvres of Hugo were carried on with impenetrable secresy, by a variety of ways they became known to so many of the domestics, that conte di Urbino's love for lady Victoria at length became a common topic of conversation among them, and in due time reached the ears of Polydore, who had long seemed, through presentiment, to anticipate this event; and dreading Orlando as a most formidable rival, he delayed not

one instant longer to put his villanous scheme against Victoria in execution. His arrangements had all been long made with Garcias, unsuspected by Elvira, to whom he first made his dreadful communications the very day upon which he had determined for Victoria's departure from the château.

The billet which called Elvira from Ursuline and Victoria, upon that memorable day, was from Vicenza, demanding an immediate interview in a cave at the extremity of the grounds, where all their schemes of villany were constantly discussed, to avoid the possibility of auricular detection.

Conte Vicenza without much preface or extenuation unfolded to Elvira the full extent of his diabolical schemes to gain possession of Victoria and the estates of Ariosto, and with the utmost coolness issued his orders to her to perform the part in this iniquitous drama which he had assigned to her.

The horrid amazement of Elvira cannot be pourtrayed by our feeble pen. The violence of her passions would have taught her to rebel; but her former crimes obliged

her, through fear of temporal punishment, to plunge yet deeper into the stream of guilt. Her murder of her father was not unknown to Polydore; and he threatened her with instant impeachment for that atrocious crime, if she did not fully enter into his projects, and immediately obey his commands. Thus menaced, Elvira was compelled to acquiesce. Farinelli was dismissed, under the appearance of mysterious resentment; Victoria sent from the château, as already stated; and every sly means taken to insinuate 'that signora Farinelli had been trying to promote an union between her pupil and an indigent kinsman of her own.'

To save appearances, Octavia and Hero were sent with Victoria. Among the attendants were some men belonging to the predacious society. Garcias with a chosen band was waiting their arrival in the forest, where the drivers, some of the banditti, conveyed the carriage. The innocent few among the attendants were sacrificed without mercy, and the females carried to the castle; where, by Polydore's desire, Gar-

cias was to have the chief management of terrifying Victoria into his villanous purpose, while Don Manuel had only a subordinate part assigned to him in this diabolical drama.

When our poor heroine was borne by the ruffians into the kitchen of the Pyrenean castle, Teresa was employed in scouring away the blood of Iago, which Don Manuel in a paroxysm of phrensied passion had inhumanly shed. The ill-fated Iago had lived to that age when mental debility sinks the adult to second childhood. The worn-out faculties of Iago had for some weeks past proclaimed his approach to that humiliating period of imbecility. A momentary suspension had been observed to steal over his memory sometimes, or his natural taciturnity give way to wild and unaccustomed garrulity. In one of these latter kinds of paroxysms, the unfortunate creature accused Don Manuel of innumerable crimes which he never had committed; and concluded with telling him that he knew his villanous schemes against Matilda, and would apprise Francisco of them. Don Manuel, not in the

least aware of the derangement of the poor man's mind, was worked by this supposed insolence and alarming threats into a delirium of the most outrageous and ungovernable fury, in which he cruelly terminated this poor old faithful domestic's existence.

The apparently supernatural voice, which struck our heroine and Octavia with such trembling awe, was no other than Francisco's. The monk often availed himself of the knowledge of a secret passage which wound round the kitchen, and over its roof, through the mosaïc work of which he often from auricular and ocular demonstration learned events which it was intended should never be known to him. In some of these invisible rounds he heard Garcias and Don Manuel talk upon the subject of Victoria's expected arrival: he was therefore upon the watch, and beheld her the moment she was brought into the kitchen. Her youth, beauty, and misfortunes forcibly interested the good properties of his heart; and from the impulse of the moment, when he saw the anguish of mind the apprehensive delicacy of her

feelings had awakened, upon hearing the carousals of the banditti at supper, in a kind of hall appropriate to the common men, almost contiguous to the kitchen, he spoke those words which echo, and the strange agency of sound through the wood-work, caused to produce so extraordinary an effect.

When Don Manuel first beheld Victoria, he was waiting to receive her in full expectation of signalising himself in the character assigned to his performance: but the moment he saw her he repented having undertaken any thing that could distress her; and when he heard her speak, so forcibly did the plaintive sweetness of her voice, with the style and manner of her conversation and deportment, remind him of Viola, that, had he followed the impulse of his heart, he would have folded her with paternal tenderness in his arms, wept over her, and promised to protect her. But the wary eye of Garcias was upon him, and he feared his ridicule and censure for inconsistency. Unwillingly, therefore, he now proceeded in the plot; and, though so famed for dissimulation,

his real admiration of our heroine prevented his sustaining the part of her lover with any degree of energy. Almost any other woman would have found his assiduities more alarming; but there was something so sacred in the innocence and purity of Victoria, that even the profligate Manuel would have perished sooner than have allowed a word or look to escape him, which could have given her trembling delicacy a single wound; and, besides the respect Victoria inspired Don Manuel with, he looked upon her as the devoted property of conte Vicenza, and his own heart he fancied pre-occupied by the image of the more dazzlingly beautiful Matilda.

Francisco, from the moment he saw Victoria, and heard the few words of sympathy she uttered to her companions in distress, like his son, became so interested for her, that he at length resolved to disperse the ruffians, to give himself time to learn what exactly was the villanous plot formed for her destruction, that if possible he might subvert it. To the gong therefore he had recourse; and Don Manuel and his ad-

herents, believing from its sound the terrible approach of danger from the Inquisition, betook themselves to their hiding-places, leaving the domestics behind to take care of the captives, and to watch if the apprehended danger was really well founded—but, from the nature of the castle, with means in their power to escape, even were the forces of the Holy Office within the castle.

Diego and Juan, our reader may remember, conducted the three new female captives to the chamber prepared for them. Elfridii had been performing some of his nocturnal inflictions; when the sound of the gong proclaiming danger, he was hastening through that very chamber a short way back to his cell, to secure his important deposit before he should attempt to escape, when the above party reached the door. Believing them to be a troop of officials, he fastened the door against them, to shut them out while he should effect his retreat. And, by striving to accumulate fastenings, he in his terror and confusion drew back the locks and bolts; by which means the

entrance of Victoria into the room was no longer impeded; when Elfridii, as much alarmed as herself, precipitately sunk through a trap-door close to the spot where she fell. In his descent, a horn dark lantern which he carried was the scorching heat and smooth surface she felt glide along her arm; while the blood which stained it was some of that flowing from the wounds Elfridii had inflicted upon himself during his evening's penance.

From the moment of Orlando's seizure by Garcias until Francisco's return from Madrid, Lorenzo suffered the most dreadful mental anguish. But although the monk's friendship for the supposed Sebastian induced him to break his faith with his associates, and assure the wretched preceptor of the safety of his beloved pupil, Lorenzo still was miserable. Deprived, as he believed, for ever of him who had reconciled him to existence, life lost every charm. Having now no longer employment to beguile his woe, the misfortunes of his life pressed heavily upon his memory. Sadness and he became again inseparable

companions; a settled melancholy stole over his whole aspect; and a prey to the most corroding grief Victoria first beheld him. Don Manuel really esteemed this still to him unknown captive; and, wishing to steal from his sorrows as much as possible, had pressed him to come to his table as often as inclination should lead him there. Our reader may suppose that was but seldom, until Victoria allured him thither. From Teresa he learned the arrival of new captives; and the account she gave him of our heroine induced him through pity to appear at breakfast. Charmed by her exterior, he felt the most lively interest awakened in his breast: but when the sound of her voice struck on his ear, so faithfully did every tone resound Viola's, that his heart's deepest wounds were rent open at once, and the emotions of his bosom were strongly pourtrayed by his intelligent countenance; and it was with infinite struggle he could command his fortitude to calm his mental anguish. But in the course of that interview so forcibly did her manners and expression of countenance, as well as her

voice, pourtray Viola, that all his firmness was at length subdued, and he was compelled to fly to give his anguish utterance.

As the night had passed without the threatened danger being realised, Garcias ventured forth from his fortress to watch and torture the child of Clementina. Don Manuel, glad of an excuse to be spared the disagreeable task of increasing the affliction of his lovely interesting captive, affected still to apprehend danger, and remained in ambush; and shortly after the pursuit of Matilda called him and his thoughts entirely from the castle.

During the first day of their meeting the admiration of Lorenzo for Victoria rapidly augmented; but when in the course of that day's conversation she announced to him her name and family, with the most painful exertions only could he repress his emotions and conceal himself. From that moment he looked upon her as his child; he watched over her with a father's agonised solicitude, and his heart bled, whilst it trembled at the dangers which surrounded her. On the first evening of his introduction to our

heroine, the tinkling of a bell (our reader perhaps remembers the circumstance) called him from the parlour. It was the summons of Francisco, to give the supposed Sebastian the transport of again beholding his beloved young pupil.

CHAP. XIII.

WHEN Orlando returned from the chase, and heard from his faithful Hugo of the mysterious departure of lady Victoria, the few impressive words he had heard her speak in reprehension of conte Vicenza arose to his imagination as dreadful phantoms of alarm. Half frantic with horrid apprehensions and vague conjectures, he flew to the duchessa; when his agonised emotions, while earnestly supplicating to learn from her the fate and destination of Victoria, betrayed the ardent passion he entertained for her.

The duchessa was dreadfully affected at the prospect of misery her crimes had aided to entail upon this beloved youth, whom she firmly believed her child; yet the fear of condign punishment prevented her betraying the secrets of the guilty Polydore. But from the apparent conflict of her mind Or-

lando gathered sufficient to be convinced that conte Vincenza was a villain. Under this conviction he hastened to him, regardless of interest, propriety, or indeed any consideration but Victoria's safety, and demanded to know whither he had sent her. High words of course ensued: and Orlando gained nothing by his youthful temerity and impetuosity, but a confirmation of every agonising fear for Victoria's safety.

To the wood Orlando now bent his way, his thoughts full of agonising grief, and anxiously wishing to save, if possible, the fascinating Victoria from some dreadful scheme of villany. But totally unacquainted with the scheme itself, he knew not what measure to adopt to counteract it; and while he lay by the lake side, ruminating in deep despair and anguish, a puppy dog training by Polydore, and a great favourite with him, ran away with a letter his master had dropped from a packet which he was about to burn.

Florio, directed by Providence, scampered close to where Orlando lay, playfully tossing

from him, snapping up and worrying the paper he had by this time crumpled into a ball. Conte Vicenza pursuing him with vehement execrations and threats, Orlando instantly conjectured that some importance was attached to Florio's play-thing; and, hoping it might prove a clue to his present perplexities, resolved if possible to gain possession of it. Florio still, as if guided by that Power who guards the just, in scampering round Orlando dropped the paper so close to him, that by changing his position he effectually hid it from the inquiring eyes of Polydore; and Florio plunging into the lake swam to the oppofite shore; when conte Vicenza, believing the dog had lost the paper while in the water, and that all was therefore safe, returned quite satisfied into the house; when Orlando, in perusing a letter from Garcias to Polydore, discovered whither Victoria was to be conveyed, and every horrid conjecture relative to her intended fate he now found surpassed by the reality—so well knowing Garcias, and the transactions of the Pyrenean castle, that, al-

most phrensied by horror and apprehension, he summoned Hugo, and set off instantly for Spain.

With almost incredible speed he reached Roussillon, where he left Hugo, still mindful of his faith to Don Manuel, and, providing himself with a guide, safely crossed the Pyrenees, and reached Cadaques the evening after Victoria had entered the castle. Immediately he inquired his way to the Observantine monastery, to which his letters for Francisco had always been directed; and as he was about to leave a billet for him there, the voice of his venerable friend bidding the porter good evening struck joyfully upon his ear. He instantly retired from the gate, and, though painfully impatient, waited until they had cleared the town before he accosted Francisco. The joy and surprise of the monk nearly subdued his faculties. However, supported by his young friend, he quickly reached his dwelling; where Orlando hastened to relieve Francisco's anxious curiosity, by making a faithful narrative of what had drawn him to that interdicted spot.

The distress and consternation of Francisco were extreme: at length, however, his love for Orlando and interest for Victoria conquered, and he promised to run every risk, and attempt every thing that could not implicate the safety of Don Manuel, to rescue her from destruction. To attempt immediately to convey her away, or without due deliberation, would be rashness in the extreme, as every danger would be to be apprehended from a pursuit; and added to the necessary prudence of caution, Francisco wished for some pretence to detain his beloved *protégé* some time near him.

At length Lorenzo was summoned.—Francisco revealed gently to him the pleasure which awaited him: yet it is impossible for us to describe the joy of the unconscious father and son at once more meeting. Lorenzo was soon informed what magnet drew his pupil into such danger. The mutual love of this beloved pupil and Victoria, under happier circumstances, would have been a source of real satisfaction to him: but under such inauspicious influence he dreaded every misfortune for them; and his own

miseries from disappointed love taught him to anticipate every evil, and to tremble for his darling's future happiness.

Almost the whole of this night they dedicated to consultation; and after innumerable schemes were discussed and rejected, it was at length determined, that as Hippolyto Orlando should enter the caſtle; a disguise so secure that no danger of detection could possibly be apprehended. Francisco knew how to prepare a perfectly innocent lotion that would dye the complexion to the exact tint neceſſary. Hippolyto had quitted the caſtle at such an age that much personal alteration must be expected in him: and all that could be remembered of him was the symmetry of his figure, the harmony and intelligence of his features, and the sound of his voice, from having learned all their mental improvement from the same instructor, being often thought analogous to the supposititious Theodore's. Nothing therefore from personal detection was to be feared. Iago was no more; a clever domestic was wanted in his department. Francisco informed Don Manuel that Hippolyto was returned

from the service of the Inquisition, and recommended him to supply Iago's place. The wishes of Francisco were as laws, neither was he to be questioned; and without any apprehension Orlando assumed that character, which gave him the power of being near, speaking to, and protecting the idol of his affections.

As Garcias had assigned to himself the part of terrifying our poor heroine by every means, our reader can readily suppose he could not adopt a more effectual method than by feigning love for her. A heart like his could not admit the tender passion: but his pretence of it was meant to increase the horrors of her situation. Her shriek reached the ears of Elfridii, who was passing through the vaults beneath the library. Attracted by the sound of distress, he instantly arose through a trap door. For a length of time this miserable penitent had shunned the sight of Garcias; and in that time of fasting, stripes, with horror of mind, and every species of contrition, had so emaciated, so changed him, that his once prime counsellor knew him not: and the crimes of Garcias

made him so very a coward where any idea of the supernatural existed, that he trembled at being alone in the library, or any part of the castle which tradition reported to be haunted. This trap door he was unacquainted with; and he hesitated not to believe that Elfridii was the apparition of some person whom he himself had murdered, and in this belief retreated in dismay; while Elfridii, in looking upon Victoria, traced in her countenance a strong resemblance to the family from which she sprung. His crimes, in dreadful array, were instantly and direfully recalled to his remembrance; reason seemed to fly before them; and in horror he sunk through the trap door with every appearance of mental derangement.

Garcias, alarmed at the singular interruption his persecution of Victoria had experienced, feared just then to return, but sent Alonzo to watch and to torment her. But that subtile wretch, enamoured of Victoria's beauty, resolved to turn the golden opportunity to his own advantage, and, pretending love for Hero, allured that weak and unsteady creature into his toils. His real de-

sign was to carry off our heroine during the absence of Don Manuel and Garcias, and, by seeming to act from their order, to deceive Diego, and elude immediate pursuit; to convey his prize to a convent in Murcia, where his sister, as profligate as himself, was domina; there to use every means to compel Victoria to become his wife; and to secure himself from the vengeance of his iniquitous brotherhood, by sacrificing them through his sister's means to the Inquisition. To Hero his plausible story was, that he meant to marry her the moment they should reach a place of safety; and that he purposed confining lady Victoria in a convent until she settled a handsome fortune upon them, and purchased nobility for him. Hero, elated by such a brilliant prospect, overlooked the injustice which must lead her to it, and soon, inebriated by vanity and love, forgot the very few good properties her heart had ever known.

The evening Victoria was chased by alarm from the piazza, the interment of the unfortunate Iago took place; and his was the coffin she saw through the chasm deposited

in a vault beneath her feet. A signal from the artillery, announcing an engagement between one of their piratical brigantines and some other ship, drew Alonzo and the sepulchral ruffians to the ramparts to learn the issue. Victoria, in flying from them, found her way into a private garden Elfridii had in his first arrangements with Don Manuel appropriated to his own sole use. In some of his wanderings he had forgotten to secure the door from the cloister by which Victoria entered; and it is now scarcely necessary to inform our reader, the figure which so alarmed her was no other than Elfridii performing some of his dreadful self-inflictions.

Notwithstanding that Garcias did not reside now in the castle, he was near enough to manage many of the operations in it; and his agents effected the removal of Octavia during a short absence of Diego, when Juan could securely infuse laudanum sufficient into the food of the female captives to make them sleep profoundly. The mysterious disappearance of signora Bernini was to terrify Victoria, while her absence was to

render the situation of this devoted victim more comfortless and forlorn.

The man whom Victoria providentially beheld enter the chamber of Neptune, as she went to seek assistance for the worthless Hero, was an assassin going to terminate the sublunary sufferings of a captive who had been long the hapless inhabitant of that prison from which our heroine, under Heaven, liberated Matilda; and at the library door she was found by Orlando as he was going from the chamber, which as a domestic he occupied, to hold an early conference with Sebastian.

In one of Francisco's visits to Orlando at Madrid, he conveyed a request from Matilda for a portrait of Orlando. A remarkably fine likeness was therefore taken of him when he went to France, and sent to her by Francisco's means; which portrait was purloined from the pocket of Matilda, with her purse and some valuable trinkets, in the church of Santa Maria, by one of the officiating fathers, who was no other than one of the ruffians employed in the conveyance of Octavia from Victoria's chamber. In ex-

amination of his prize, he was struck by the strong resemblance the picture pourtrayed, and determined upon giving it to Don Manuel; by whom he thought such a discovery as it indicated would be considered of importance, and much more likely to redound to his advantage than the concealment of the brilliants could possibly do. The moment he had made this determination, he was summoned upon his mission to Victoria's chamber; and anxious to secrete the picture from all but Don Manuel, he thrust it into his bosom—from whence its own weight forced it in his exertions to lift Octavia's bed from off the platform on which it sunk, and upon which the portrait of Orlando arose. Its being in a black ſhagreen case prevented Victoria's observing it, until, in the bustle occasioned by Hero's illness, the caſe had been burst open by being trod upon, when the brilliancy of the gems arrested her attention.

Although Lorenzo believed it would be almoſt an impossibility for Victoria to behold his fascinating pupil with indifference, he yet was anxious for the moment to arrive

when she should see him in his proper person, that he then might judge if this attachment was likely to become reciprocal. When therefore she discovered the portrait to him with such artless and evident marks of admiration, charmed and delighted Lorenzo resolved by evasive answers to appear ignorant of the original, and leave the picture in her possession for further contemplation—which he doubted not must prove to his beloved pupil's advantage ; and through these means he was not long left to tremble for the happiness of Orlando from inauspicious love.

By means also of this portrait Francisco learned that, in promoting the schemes of his *protégé*, he was likely in every way to advance the happiness of the interesting young captive; since it was his shadow which so distressed and alarmed her as he opened a private passage, intending to take a short way across the library to his own apartments; when, unobserved for some moments, he surprised Victoria weeping over this to him well known miniature, and heard the few desponding words she uncon-

sciously articulated: and from that moment he became more anxious than even before to effect her rescue from the villanous leagues formed against her.

CHAP. XIV.

We must now beg leave to return with our reader to take a view of Matilda. She had been spared the pang of believing Orlando had been assassinated, as from the moment of his seizure, until Francisco's return from Madrid, she heard nothing of the transactions at the castle. But when the monk told her the sad intelligence of her beloved young friend's having been taken from his protection, and the probability there existed of her never seeing him more, her distress was so poignant, that, fearing its inroads upon her health, Francisco was induced to grant permission for her accompanying Donna Hortensia (an amiable and uncommonly lovely young woman, whose friendship she had gained in the convent of Santa Maria,) on a short visit to the parents of that young lady residing at La Carolina, but with positive injunctions to appear no

where unveiled, and not to go to any public entertainment whatever during her stay in Andalusia.

As their journey drew close to its termination, the carriage they travelled in was stopped in a lonely part of the Sierra Morena, through which the road to La Carolina lay, by a party of Don Manuel's banditti. Their attendants were too few to attempt contention; and these two beautiful girls, with an old duenna, were upon the point of becoming a prey to these desperate ruffians, when Providence sent two valiant cavaliers, with their guides and other attendants, to their rescue. The brigands fled discomfited, and the gallant champions safely conducted the rescued damsels to the house of Don Olivarez Piero Ferdinando St. Estrevan.

Donna Rodolpha, the mother of Hortensia, was truly a woman of the world, and knew full keenly how to twine every incident she met with to her family's advantage. Her Don was of the Hidalgo: but few were the pistoles he had to bestow upon his children; and quickly this politic woman found out that the two cavaliers were well worth

the attention of her speculative genius, since one was the French marquis de Liancourt, the other the Italian conte di Ariosto; both come from France to join the regiment of the latter, which was then halting a few days at La Carolina on its way to Cadiz.

Donna Rodolpha's eldest daughter, Seraphina, was fully equal to Hortensia in mental and personal attractions; but lovely as they were, and partial as their mother was to their perfections, she was compelled to acknowledge to herself that Donna Matilda was more strikingly beautiful than either of them, and therefore a most dangerous and unwelcome competitor. The injunctions, therefore, of Francisco were most rigidly adhered to, and poor Matilda confined with the old governante and the younger girls to a sequestered apartment, during the visits of Alphonso and his friend, except when it was posible without singularity to appear veiled before them.

Veiled or unveiled Matilda might have appeared before Alphonso without injury to the politics of Donna Rodolpha, since glory was then the idol of his homage, and Pallas

usurped the entire dominion over his mind, and the fascinating St. Estrevans he beheld unmoved. Not so the marquis de Liancourt, who in six months after his introduction to her led the lovely Seraphina to the hymeneal altar.

Matilda beheld Alphonso equal in figure to the supposed Theodore, in face more to her fancy, and in manners too captivating for her repose. She was young, unknowing of the world, highly romantic, and long pent up in a cloister, where that romance had been encouraged by ignorance and inaction. Alphonso had rescued her from destruction, and every rule of romance demanded her heart, whether solicited or not, in recompense; and she returned from her first visit to the world, to Santa Maria, with the image of Alphonso as indelibly stampt upon her heart as Victoria's was imprest upon Orlando's. And when he suddenly entered Victoria's chamber (although aware of his being in the castle, and that to see him was a thing she might naturally expect), Matilda was so overpowered by the emotions of her heart that she fainted, while Alphonso ima-

gined the words he had spoken relative to Urbino's union had so affected her. The unsubdued tenderness Matilda's bosom cherished for conte Ariosto occasioned all the subsequent changes in her countenance from time to time, and which were attributed by her observers to another cause. Alphonso's scrutinising gaze confused her; his unkindness, bordering upon ill-concealed disgust, wounded her to the very soul; and, by blighting her peace, was rapidly spreading its baneful influence to her health; while Alphonso never once supposed the being, whom affection to his sister taught him to dislike, was the animated and grateful veiled incognita whom he had rescued from destruction in Andalusia.

About the period of Matilda's return from her excursion to La Carolina, Guzman, a profligate monk, and one of the predacious brotherhood, gained free access to the convent of Santa Maria, as one of the father confessors. At Santa Maria he often encountered Francisco; of whose power there, and in the castle, he was so jealous, that he eagerly panted for an opportunity of doing

something secretly to afflict or injure him. Long he did not wait for means to gratify his malicious wish. He soon learned the great interest Francisco took in the welfare of Matilda. This led him to observation; and, subtile and keen, he quickly conjectured all that was fact concerning her. The costly rosary she wore, which he well remembered to have seen with Viola, and many other circumstances, combined to lead him to conceive that this was no other than Viola's child, whom report had taught him to believe no longer in existence: and by watching Francisco he found that he sometimes took her to his habitation, but only in the certain absences of Don Manuel; from which conjecturing Francisco had some powerful motive for concealing her from Don Manuel (whose attachment to Viola his phrensy upon her death revealed to all the inhabitants of the castle), Guzman resolved at once to disclose to his commandant all he knew and conjectured relative to this beautiful girl.

Don Manuel, highly incensed at his father's duplicity, and concealment of Viola's

child from him, to whose protection her mother in her last moments so impressively consigned her, instantly resolved to claim his right, and take her, even by force, from her present guardian. But Guzman, anxious as he was to subvert the wishes of Francisco, also dreaded his vengeance, and strongly advised Don Manuel to adopt the subtile plans of art, for gaining possession of a ward so decidedly consigned to his care, so unjustifiably concealed from him.

"Violence will never succeed with father Francisco," said Guzman. "Be subtile as he is wary, and have retribution and vengeance at the same moment, by the triumph of effectually over-reaching him. Let us reflect before we act; and surely we shall be able to adopt some plan, in which, by avoiding his suspicions, we shall escape his vengeance."

Don Manuel now subscribed to the prudence of Guzman's advice: they consulted together, and took their measures accordingly. Don Manuel departed from the castle, after taking an affectionate leave of his father, whom he amused with a specious

tale of a tedious expedition he was going upon, which would inevitably detain him some time from home. Deceived by this story, Francisco (as the confederates expected) shortly after he believed Don Manuel gone, brought Matilda to the castle to visit Lorenzo; and while they were all three comfortably conversing, secure in imagination from any interruption, Don Manuel unexpectedly entered, plausibly accounting to Francisco for his speedy return.

All were terribly disconcerted by his appearance, but the consternation nay dismay of Francisco was pitiable. He expected instantly to be convicted of imposing upon the credulity of his son, and dreaded every evil consequence to Matilda from this untoward meeting. But Don Manuel, fully equal to the part he meant to play, although forcibly struck by her dazzling beauty, and the resemblance his fancy traced in her to her adored mother, yet had such command over his feelings, that he at once totally put to flight the fears and suspicions of Francisco. Matilda's appearance seemed to create in him no degree of admiration whatever, and

only that portion of surprise which seeing a young female stranger in such a place might naturally awaken: and when he afterwards took an opportunity of inquiring, from Francisco, who this young stranger was, his questions appeared more as if inspired by prudence relative to the general safety, than by any curiosity respecting herself.

Completely lured into security by the dissimulation of Don Manuel, and every apprehension hushed, Francisco slackened in his former circumspection; and, believing that Don Manuel gave credit to the story he fabricated of Matilda's being the child of Elfridii committed to his care, no longer attended to the absences of his son, but incautiously indulged Matilda in visiting him and Lorenzo whenever she desired it; by which means Don Manuel had frequent opportunities of seeing and conversing with her, and soon, in addition to his wish of outwitting Francisco, had a stronger inducement. Matilda was the child of Viola, was therefore dearer to him than any thing now in existence; and he believed himself violently in love with this beautiful girl. The

ardent affection he had borne her mother he fancied now transferred to Matilda, but with it not that veneration, that fear of offending, that wish of making happy. Could Viola have been recalled from the grave, his heart would have refused the admission of any other object: as it was, he determined that no power on earth should prevent Matilda from becoming his.

Francisco had apprised Matilda of the arrival of Orlando at the castle, when he returned thither to save Victoria from destruction, and promised her an interview with him as soon as prudence (upon Orlando's account) would permit. The time for her visiting her guardian's habitation was appointed. The artless Matilda, in transport at the idea of so soon beholding her beloved Theodore, whom she had long believed she was doomed no more to see, by some unguarded expression announced to her companions "her guardian's intention of taking her that evening to his cave, to see a dear friend of hers."

The wary Guzman, who learned all this, contrived to have Francisco detained at his

cell in the forest by a troop of pilgrims, while he himself went to Santa Maria, completely disguised as a venerable lay brother of the Observantine monastery, and delivered an order to the domina, apparently written by Francisco, to deliver Matilda to his care; who, unsuspicious of treachery, cheerfully accompanied him, until his taking a different path in the forest to that which led to Francisco's cell taught her apprehension. Instantly she stopped, and refused to proceed.

Guzman, disdaining entreaty, rudely seized her arm to pull her onwards; and Matilda shrieking vehemently as he dragged her with him, her cries were heard by Francisco, who was then proceeding to Cadaques. The voice he thought resembled Matilda's; yet hers it could not be. However, it was certainly some female in distress; and he pursued the sound a considerable way, often shouting loudly, to alarm the ruffians, and give notice to the distrest that succour was at hand. The subtile Guzman, recognising Francisco's voice, instantly determined upon a change of plan.

By this time he had been joined by two brother ruffians, who were in wait for him; and instead of conveying Matilda to that part of the castle particularly sacred to Don Manuel, which was the original intention, they hurried her to one of those secret caverns with which the forest abounded, and, placing her in one of the interior cavities, from whence no sound could issue, guarded her until midnight; when they dragged her thence, and through some of the surrounding subterraneous passages at length conducted her to that very chamber in the castle occupied by Victoria, a chamber long unused, and still believed to be so by Guzman.

In the intermediate time Francisco, after wandering about the forest in vain for near an hour, at length no longer hearing the cries, gave up the pursuit. Upon his arrival at Santa Maria, dreadful were his dismay and consternation upon hearing of the treachery which had been practised by some one to gain possession of Matilda; and now no longer in doubt as to whose shrieks he had heard and followed, he returned almost frantic to the forest; and after wandering

there again, unsuccessfully, for above two hours, he proceeded, overwhelmed with grief and despair, to his own apartments, where Lorenzo and Orlando had long been anxiously waiting the arrival of Matilda.

The intelligence Francisco brought of her filled them both with despair and anguish. Orlando instantly determined upon going in quest of her; but in the character of Hippolyto Francisco would not hear of it. At length he determined upon Orlando's sallying forth as a Spanish cavalier, a prisoner to the Holy Office. From the castle wardrobe Orlando was equipped with a dress appropriate to the Hidalgo, and a mask, to be worn both as a prisoner and to conceal his face from the recognition of Don Manuel's people.

Orlando, thus disguised, issued forth with Francisco to the Holy Office at Cadaques, from whence the latter sent him in pursuit of Matilda, with a squadron of soldiers and officials to guard and to assist him; and when at midnight Francisco was returning from Cadaques, after the departure of Orlando and his troop, the cries of Matilda, who was then removing from the cavern,

again assailed his ears. He pursued the sound, and, more fortunate than before, traced her to the apartment where the ruffians left her; and being acquainted with the secret passage from the church to it, he quickly availed himself of that important knowledge, and effected her rescue.

Matilda's return to Santa Maria he now considered too replete with danger to be attempted. The circumstance of finding her in the castle opened at once his eyes upon his son's dissimulation. Many incidents now recurred to his remembrance of Don Manuel's profound dissimulation relative to Matilda; and now the eye of suspicion was opened he saw through them all, and trembled at the magnitude of those surrounding dangers he had inadvertently involved her in. To Elfridii he hastened to relate his embarrassments, and all that had occurred; who revealed to him the secret of two small apartments contiguous to Sebastian's and to the church, where he advised Matilda's taking refuge until a more proper asylum could be discovered for her. These apartments now Francisco made as comfortable

for her reception as time would admit of, and Matilda took immediate possession of them.

Orlando with his attendants wandered unsuccessfully through the night in search of Matilda; and at the hour in which Francisco generally returned from his official business at Cadaques he parted with his guards at the entrance of Francisco's cell, and proceeded to his friend's apartment; who, after having announced to Orlando the present safety of Matilda, and whose machinations they had now to apprehend relative to her, conducted him to the church, for fear of observation, until he could have an opportunity to change his dress and his complexion, and desired him there to remain until his return, after he should dismiss the Inquisitorial troop, and the levee of devotees, who each day thronged to his cell about that hour to receive the benediction of the holy hermit.

But though Orlando's mind was relieved by Francisco relative to Matilda's immediate safety; yet so much did he apprehend upon her account from the machinations of Don Manuel, so uncertain was his own fate,

and so replete with horrors was the situation of her whose happiness was infinitely dearer to him than his own, that he was completely lost in profound and melancholy musing, when he was roused from his reverie by her who formed the most painfully interesting part of his meditation.

Nothing could equal his amazement at beholding his adored Victoria in the church, except his pleasure at the unexpected interview. But though powerful was the tumult his feelings were awakened to, he still possessed sufficient command over his prudence and honour not to break his solemn promise to Francisco, by discovering himself to her; for the wary monk, fearing that if Victoria was entrusted with the secret of who Hippolyto was, and the motive of his disguise, she might, in some unguarded moment of terror or distress, reveal it, and overwhelm both him and herself in total and inevitable destruction, therefore bound him, by his most sacred word, never to disclose to her his real situation, until they both should be effectually emancipated from the power of the predacious society, and completely

out of the reach of Garcias. But though Orlando was interdicted from telling Victoria that he loved her, he could not resist the pleasure of speaking of his passion, in terms which she could not, believing him a perfect stranger, think pointed to her, and which led her to imagine he was attached to some one who returned his passion: and circumstances afterwards presented Matilda to her as that happy object; and that misleading and misconception aided to form the source of much subsequent misery to them both. The tolling of the bell, which that morning urged Orlando to entreat the immediate departure of Victoria from the church, he knew to be his mysterious guardian's constant summon to Francisco to meet him in the church when he had any business to discuss with him; and Orlando dreaded any danger that might accrue to this idol of his heart, should Elfridii see her in a place he had made Francisco swear never to reveal to any of the captives.

During the period of Victoria's first adventures in the church, Diego had learned from Guzman an account of the new cap-

tive he had taken to such a chamber the preceding night, and her mysterious escape from thence; when, much chagrined and distrest at Victoria's having been so disturbed, after all his promises to her, and alarmed about all the probable consequences of a captive's escape, Diego had spent some time in quest of our heroine, to learn, if possible, some particulars of this escape from her, before he found her in the library, immediately after that eventful excursion which Guzman and his companions had forced her to take, when they entered her chamber with a view of removing Matilda to the apartment appointed by Don Manuel for her concealment.

CHAP. XV.

THE night of Alonzo's daring attempt to carry off our heroine, Orlando, in passing to his chamber, heard her shriek. That to him was an invincible attractor; and she was encircled by his protecting arm almost in the same instant: and next morning, after she had visited him in his dungeon (where she first was startled by the tender yet ardent expression of his countenance, which strongly reminded her of the stranger she had that day met in the church), he evinced so much distress, nay anguish, at the idea of failing in his appointment, which he confessed to Francisco he had made with her, that the indulgent monk was subdued by compassion, and relieved him from his afflictions. He took Orlando from his cell, through a private passage from the dungeons, to his own apartments, where he allowed him to reassume his own complexion, and the cavalier's

dress, and then admitted him into the church to fulfil his appointment with Victoria.

During their imprisonment in the same dungeon, it was impossible to conceal from Thomas that the supposed Hippolyto was no other than his tenderly deplored young champion: but that grateful and affectionate creature was easily sworn to secresy; and even in the time of unbounded joy at the discovery, and in the trying moments of danger and distress, he proved faithful to his promise.

The despair and anguish of Orlando, during the time of Victoria's serious illness, were indeed pitiable. Francisco, for form sake, had him still confined to the dungeon. But the affectionate old man took care to convey intelligence respecting her, almost as frequently as the anxious impatience of his young friend required it; and at length, when Victoria was sufficiently recovered to leave her chamber, he earnestly supplicated for permission to see her. But Francisco, who had witnessed his anguish about her, feared the tenderness of his emotions, in the joy of once more beholding her, might lead

to the discovery of more than was then consistent with prudence to reveal to her; and as the moment for her escape was not yet arrived, he commissioned Lorenzo to prevent her having any opportunity to wander into the church, where, fearing the effect of close confinement upon Orlando's health, he suffered him to walk two hours each day.

Our reader is already acquainted with conte di Vicenza's plans relative to Victoria; and when the moment arrived in which, according to his arrangements, he was to follow her into the Pyrenean castle, he judged it expedient to take with him an unfortunate young man, whose morals he had ably assisted in corrupting, and who was now entirely dependent upon him for patronage and support. Polydore well knew that Victoria was totally unacquainted with the person of conte di Urbino, but by no means so with the amiable character he bore. All his undertakings were honourable and just; and to impress our heroine with a belief that his own intentions relative to her were equally so, he ordered Massaniello, his handsome dependent and satellite, to assume the name

of conte di Urbino: and joining Don Manuel and Garcias, with whom he then kept up a constant correspondence, they all entered the castle together, resolved, by accumulating every horror, to terrify Victoria into conte Vicenza's diabolical measures; and when Hero was liberated from the prison Francisco had sentenced her to, she was found a most willing auxiliary.

Our sagacious readers can scarcely want our aid to inform them, that Polydore, to appear amiable in Victoria's eyes, affected no knowledge of, or connexion with, the Pyrenean brigands, and meant that she should believe affection for her had led him to brave all the horrors and perils with which captivity in that castle abounded. But whatever part Massaniello had assigned to him, he soon became a languid performer. The beauty and distress of Victoria first taught him that he had a heart capable of admitting love and humanity, and his patron's favour he would gladly have forfeited to effect her rescue from destruction; but the wary Garcias saw and prevented every effort of poor Massaniello's to befriend her.

To wound and alarm her delicacy, conte Vicenza had commissioned Don Manuel to appear her inamorato; but he soon became her sincere admirer and friend: yet fearing to injure her cause by provoking Garcias and Vicenza, and not choosing to break a promise which he had given before he saw her, he forbore to evince the real regard her similitude in mind and manners to Viola had taught him to feel for her, and under the appearance of a fictitious one for some time dreadfully augmented her distress. The imprisonment of Teresa and Pedro, with the removal of Diego, and her own confinement, were all the policy of the malicious Garcias to drive her into their snares; and to her dungeon an auxiliary found its way which Garcias little thought of.

A captive whom Garcias had taken on board a West Indiaman had dragged on a miserable existence for eleven years in that castle, the last four of which he languished in a dungeon, suffering every species of cruelty from the displeasure of Garcias. When taken, this man had with him a remarkably fine parrot, which he had meant

to make money by in Europe; and this parrot Garcias ordered should attend his master to his dungeon, with a barbarous hope that his astounding noise and shrill squalling would disturb the miserable captive, who suffered dreadfully from a nervous malady in his head.

Death had released this wretched captive from his calamities a few days only before Victoria occupied his place in the dungeon. The parrot was taken by Gonzalvo to his own apartments. The bird had, unknown to the stern dungeon-keeper, followed him into his late habitation; and the words and accents he had caught from his deranged master most direfully increased Victoria's terrors. The flapping of the bird's wings, as he heavily flew across the cell to look for food, extinguished her expiring lamp, and left her a prey to the most awful enervating fears: but in despite of every horror her firm reliance upon Heaven supported her along the path of rectitude, and every plan of the vile associates against her was foiled by the decree of Him in whom she trusted.

In that moment when our persecuted he-

roine had fainted in the library, after having refused to sign the contract, and that her villanous tormentors were only waiting her recovery to compel her to it, Heaven ordained that the duca di Manfredonia and Francisco, in returning from visiting Orlando in his prison, and not knowing that any person was in the library—for it was unusual after night-fall—were about to avail themselves (for expedition's sake) of that passage already mentioned in explaining the appearance of the shadow. Vicenza leaned against the very pannel, and feeling it move beneath his hand naturally looked to see the cause; when his astonished eyes beheld the countenance of the duca di Manfredonia, which, though so changed by years of misery, Polydore instantly recognised to be the face of him, he firmly believed, he had so long since consigned to the murderer's hand. Appalled by this dreadful preternatural visitation, which he conceived it to be, his senses instantly forsook him; and Lorenzo quickly closed the pannel, unobserved by any other person: and now for the first time this unfortunate man presumed to solicit Fran-

cisco to expedite the escape of Victoria and his beloved pupil.

From all which Victoria (little knowing whom she was addressing) had told Lorenzo from time to time of her aunt and conte Vicenza, and all the direful histories of both, full fraught with which Orlando returned from France, Lorenzo little doubted but to the villany of Polydore he owed his own captivity. Seeing this wretch now in the castle gave conviction to suspicion, and explained the reason why Garcias had ordered him to remain a close prisoner in his own apartments. All he had himself suffered from the villany of Vicenza taught him to apprehend the direst horrors for Victoria, unless she was instantly snatched from the fangs of the fiends who were determined upon her destruction; and so powerfully he pleaded, that Francisco resolved to sacrifice every selfish feeling, and immediately to provide for her escape.

The brigantine which Alonzo had prepared for his attempt still lay in readiness; and Francisco immediately set about selecting a sufficient number of hands to work it—

of men whom he dared to trust with such an important commission without fearing their betraying him to Garcias. The fugitives once out of the reach of pursuit, he feared not the wrath of Garcias. He was an Inquisitor! and that terrible word settled all his accounts with the predacious brotherhood: and to those men to whom he now confided this enterprise he gave the most efficacious charge for the safety of Victoria, and for their protection of her; since he told them, "that, if pursued, and they allowed the lady Victoria to fall into the hands of the pursuers, their lives should answer it before the tribunal of the Inquisition." This was an arduous, difficult, and delicate matter to arrange; yet in the course of that night he selected a sufficient number of men in whom he could confide. Orlando he forbore to apprise of his intentions until all was warily settled for escape the succeeding night.

In the intermediate time, Alonzo, sufficiently recovered from his wounds, again thought of putting his rash project into execution. He was in the secret of conte Vi-

cenza's schemes, and knew therefore not a moment must now be lost. While imprisoned by Francisco in the western tower, he had insidiously corrupted the fidelity of his sentinel; who, in passing to or from Alonzo's prison, encountered Elfridii upon one of his penitential rambles. This man watched him, and saw him enter our heroine's chamber through a secret way which no other person in the castle knew of. This important discovery he hastened with to his new friend Alonzo, who resolved to avail himself of such precious information; and, when he judged it expedient, sent his minion Carlos to this private door to make his observations, and find out the best way of carrying off our heroine in the dead of the succeeding night. Alonzo perceived not that Carlos was inebriated: but that wretch had just drunk enough to stupefy his senses, yet thought himself wondrous wise. Arrived at this secret pass, and availing himself of some cracks in the tapestry, he saw how deeply Victoria was engaged in prayer; and it struck his brilliant imagination that it would be a very clever exploit to lead Hero to Alonzo,

for them all to consult together. Unseen by Victoria he now could do it, but thought not once of how Hero could return unobserved. Not, however, in a mood for reflecting upon consequences, he presented himself to Hero's view. Surprise transfixed her for a moment, and prevented any exclamation; and upon Carlos cautiously motioning for her to follow him in silence, she unhesitatingly complied—her still unsubdued attachment to Alonzo leading her to hope, from this unexpected summons, all her fond deluded heart taught her to wish realised.

They departed unseen, unheard by Victoria, then completely absorpt in her employment: and on their way to the chamber of Alonzo they were met by Francisco, who was then roving about arranging for our heroine's escape, and who, suspecting treachery from their appearance at such an hour, commanded them to follow him in silence. They dared not disobey; and he led them on to his cell, where two officials of the Holy Office were then waiting for his orders relative to some other business; into whose hands he instantly delivered Hero and

Carlos, with directions to confine them in the prisons of the Holy Office at Cadaques until further orders. Francisco had no intention of destroying them; but believing they had been watching him, and had discovered his plans, he thought this the most effectual method of preventing their malicious purposes: and no trace remaining in the castle of Hero or Carlos occasioned much amaze and consternation to Garcias and his associates.

The enraptured Orlando, when informed the following morning that all was ready for escape at night, hastened, on the glad wings of hope and joy, to the monument in the church, contiguous to the library; where anxiously watching for his adored Victoria, Heaven at length permitted him to inform her, that the happy moment of her emancipation was at hand. This short but joyful interview past, Orlando dedicated the remaining moments of his stay to his beloved Sebastian, Francisco, and Matilda. A day of dreadful agitation it was to him: the saddening fear of no more beholding those

friends so dear to him rent again his heart with anguish; but love was arbitrary, and tore him from every other tender tie. But at length Francisco, overcome by the sorrow he felt and witnessed, promised that whilst he lived they should all sometimes meet. This was consolation—a cordial that inspirited all: and when Orlando conducted Matilda back to her solitary apartments at an early hour (he and Francisco having much to arrange before the time of departure), Victoria heard those words of ardent friendship uttered by Matilda which conveyed so much and such lengthened anguish to her heart.

In vain had Orlando importuned Francisco to allow Matilda (who he could scarcely believe was not his sister, though no earthly testimony had appeared to convince him that she was so) to accompany Victoria; but the monk pleaded, in excuse for his denial, the agony of mind " that he should suffer, were both the children of his care at once to leave him. Matilda must comfort him and Sebastian for the loss they were about to

sustain: but at a future period he would provide a safe and honorable asylum for her, even perhaps with him and lady Victoria."

All this was plausible; but Francisco had a more forcible, yet untold, motive for her stay lurking in his mind. This strange, this versatile old man, tenderly attached to his lately discovered son, fondly hoped to see the hour of his reformation. He knew there were some seeds of good propensities in Don Manuel's heart; and he flattered himself that, though late, they would some time flourish, and exterminate all those noxious weeds which had so long poisoned the soil, and blighted each bud of virtue; and the young, beautiful, and amiable Matilda should be the rich reward of that anxiously wished-for time; until when he was resolved not only to conceal her from the world, but if possible from Don Manuel himself; upon whom, in his present profligate state, he would not for kingdoms bestow what he considered such an inestimable treasure.

As the evening of the intended escape advanced, Francisco became restless and

suspicious, and so apprehensive of treachery and discovery, that he wandered from passage to passage, round the kitchen, library, parlour, listening to every sound, and attentive to every transaction; by which means he became acquainted with the plan of changing Victoria's chamber, which was occasioned by Hero's mysterious disappearance the preceding night. It was now necessary to apprise Orlando of this unexpected event. He hastened therefore to the church, where our hero and Pedro (whom, with Thomas, Francisco had stolen out of prison, as men in whom he might safely confide) were in waiting. Their consternation and Orlando's anguish were dreadful, until Francisco assured them he could (although through a tedious way) even conduct them to her new apartment; and now, for the first time, he objected to Orlando's appearing in his own person as the deliverer of Victoria.

"I have been maturely deliberating over this matter," said he, "and now think that as Hippolyto you will appear as my agent, and one devoted to the interest and

service of the Inquisition; and the men will have no incentive to betray you, or to operate against their fears of me and the Holy Office. But if you go as Theodore, they know the enmity of Garcias to you; and therefore, if pursued and overpowered, that his immediate vengeance would fall upon them for assisting you, and that they would be sacrificed before they could claim the inquisitorial protection: you, therefore, they would instantly deliver to your pursuers, even should they attempt to contend for the possession of lady Victoria."

There was too much reason in what Francisco urged for Orlando to make any objection. Beside, he considered that although as Hippolyto his views upon Victoria's heart had no chance of being advanced, yet it would be more congenial to the delicacy of her feelings, he was well aware, to be thrown upon the protection of a man whose apparent situation placed him at such an humble distance, than on that of a young unmarried man, her equal in rank, and almost a stranger to her: he therefore unhesitatingly hastened to change his dress and

his complexion, and solemnly pledged himself to Francisco not to reassume his own natural appearance, or avow himself to her, until every fear of the villanous confederates was removed.

At length, after a tedious and troublesome route, Francisco providentially conducted Orlando to the chamber of our heroine, just in time to rescue her from the villanous machinations of conte Vicenza; who, the moment he found himself wounded, and that Victoria was snatched from him, made such a tumult, that Garcias and some of his myrmidons, who were waiting at no great distance, ready at call, to force Victoria by further cruelties to sign the contract, appeared. A surgeon was summoned to dress the wound, and a search throughout the castle immediately set on foot.

A length of time was necessarily taken up in examining all the known passages, and in questioning Gonzalvo as to Hippolyto's liberation from prison; which he was totally ignorant of, as Francisco had effected it: for, by Polydore's description of Victoria's champion, Hippolyto at once was known to

be the miscreant. An alarm was given to the outposts; so that for a length of time the final escape of the fugitives was thought impossible. But at last, after minute investigation, and general consternation from some sounds one of the sentinels had heard off shore, they were led to suppose they had put to sea: and a quick sailing caravel, with Garcias and his own crew, as speedily as possible got under weigh in pursuit of them. And as it was concluded that France would be the destination of the fugitives, Garcias stood off for that coast.

CHAP. XVI.

After the daring achievement of Diego had rescued himself and friends from the diabolical power of Garcias, the helmsman, whom he had strongly fettered, guessing the nature of Diego's plan, made every effort to liberate himself, and to be heard by his messmates—but in vain—until, as night advanced, the portentous appearances of the clouds creating his most serious alarm, he was at length worked into a perfect phrensy of apprehension, and, by the strength of desperation, broke from his bonds, and with much difficulty and labour roused almost all the ship's company to a sense of their imminent danger. All idea of revenge or pursuit was now lost in that of personal apprehension. Every nerve was strained; and their exertions, aided by the excellent condition of the caravel, Providence allowed to steer them in safety back to the

Pyrenees, having a greater punishment in store for those who had long braved, but well deserved, its vengeance.

We recollect no circumstance from this time, until the duchessa di Manfredonia arrived at the château, where our heroine had taken refuge after the shipwreck, that requires explanation to our patient reader. The perplexity and consternation of that diabolical woman were excessive, when she found Victoria was in that château where she so shortly expected to be joined by comte de Montfort; who, though entrapped by her artful blandishments, still sighed for and idolized Victoria. The sight of her, therefore, Elvira well knew threatened destruction to all her own schemes relative to that weak and volatile young man, who was now the dearest object in the world to her, of whose credulity she had taken every advantage; and, by deceiving him with a plausible story of Victoria's having retired for life into a convent, destroyed every hope of his obtaining her, and at length lured him into her own toils.

Our heroine's name was no secret to the domestics of the château; and even could Elvira remove her from Montfort's sight, she could not hope to conceal from his knowledge her having been there: thus her deceptions would be discovered, his hopes renewed, and her own for ever blasted. Love and jealousy, in arms, led her to resolve upon some desperate enterprise to crush his hopes at once, and save herself from the bitter pangs of disappointment; determining that not even the fame or happiness of Victoria should be spared in the attempt: and so rashly did the impetuosity of her passions urge her on, that, in striving to secure her young favourite to herself, she braved the vengeance of conte Vicenza, nor seemed once to reflect how totally her crimes had placed her in his power, or how unrelentingly he would pursue her to destruction, should she prove the means of foiling his schemes and annihilating his hopes of obtaining Victoria.

With no other counsellor then than her own invention, she arranged her plans, and

only called in her familiars, Bianca and Maratti, to assist in the execution of them. Determined to work upon the feelings of her susceptible niece, to terrify her into a marriage that must at once destroy all Montfort's hopes, she first strove to conciliate the too justly estranged affection of Victoria; then fabricated the story of Polydore's death, and Hippolyto's attainder. Maratti procured the men to personate assassins, who were artfully thrown, with every alarming circumstance, in the way of the timid Roselia, whom Maratti not once lost sight of, and who, as Elvira well conjectured, would, though unintentionally, prove a valuable auxiliary: and fearing the power and interference of the monks Anselmo and Pierre, should Victoria apply to them for advice or protection, Elvira thought it judicious to win them over to her interest, often having derived ready assistance from the venal brothers of the convent. But with all her art she was not equal to a combat with the inflexible virtue of father Pierre; while with the placid Anselmo she seemed to succeed beyond her most sanguine expecta-

tions. But Anselmo, not less firm in virtue than his brother Pierre, only seemed to enter into her plans to subvert them.

Anselmo knew the duchessa di Manfredonia well; although the lapse of many years, his change of name, of country, language, his overshadowing cowl, secured the good, the just, the pious, venerable Rinaldo from the recognition of his sworn implacable enemy. Trembling for the fate of conte Ariosto's child, the good man affected the sanctified villain; and promising to aid her in all her vile machinations, he was sent to win Hippolyto to her purpose.

The holy man, strongly prepossessed in favour of that gallant young man, candidly unbosomed himself to him; and Orlando, equally pleased with the good monk, as frankly disclosed his supposed name and situation to him, his views upon Victoria's heart, and all the dangers she had escaped, with those that still threatened her; when, after much deliberation, it was mutually agreed, that could Victoria, even by stratagem, be led into the intended marriage, it would be the safest asylum from destruc-

tion which circumstances now left open for her; since from the protection of a husband, upon whom her guardian had bestowed her, the machinations of her enemies could not withdraw her; while at the same time, as it must in some degree be a compulsatory union upon lady Victoria's side, it would be still in her power to cancel it at some future day, when her brother returned to guard her.

Anselmo conveying to Elvira Hippolyto's ready assent to the proposed marriage, he was allowed to return, though privately, with the monk to St. Lewis; and when Victoria's reluctant compliance was obtained, Anselmo was summoned to the duchessa, to arrange with her every thing relative to the marriage; and upon his return to the convent he contrived to send that billet in the label to lull Victoria's fears, and give her courage to proceed.

It would be too bold an attempt for us to pourtray the feelings of Orlando upon that eventful morning when the hand of Victoria was united to his. The tumult of his mind was too powerful for our description;

and the tortures of uncertainty, although lessened by the soft insinuations of flattering hope, were almost too violent to be concealed from observation. But when he beheld the affecting trepidation of the lovely victim which perfidy bestowed upon him; when he saw her amiable and delicate efforts to spare him the pangs of mortification; with difficulty could he restrain the impetuous impulse which would have thrown him at her feet, there to acknowledge all of deception which circumstances had led him to practise towards her; to avow his name, and plead for her pity and forgiveness. But prudence prevailed over the tenderness even of his feelings. He thought the moment not arrived that could release him from his sacred promise to Francisco. He felt himself not out of the power of his enemies, while his dearer self was encompassed by their toils; and not until she was safely lodged at St. Marguerite's he had predetermined upon making the important discovery to Victoria. However, the unexpected arrival of comte de Montfort changed at once his intentions. He knew full well the impetuosity

and insolence of that young man's temper, with the ardency of his adoration of Victoria; and from all united he apprehended some unpleasant occurrences, ungenial to the delicacy of Victoria's feelings, degrading to her dignity, were she suffered to appear to him as the wife of the obscure Hippolyto, and with no other protection than such a friendless unknown alien could afford her.

The moment, therefore, that the wily Elvira closed the door upon him and the good Rinaldo, he hastened (finding the apartment he had retired to was a dressing-room, and suited to his purpose) to re-assume his own complexion; and when, as conte di Urbino, he answered the envenomed summons of the duchessa "to the husband of Victoria di Modena" to appear, no pen can (at least ours cannot) pourtray the dismay and consternation of the diabolical Elvira. The infatuation of jealousy and passion was chased at once by the terror of conviction; for well she knew the fatal blow she had thus given to Polydore's views upon Victoria, by uniting her to him she believed his own son, was the inevitable fiat

for her destruction. Immediately, therefore, she fled with her two associates in guilt, Maratti and Bianca, to England, taking with her, for subsistence, the jewels, and a few other valuables she had with her in Provence. But in England she found not the tranquil asylum she sought for: appalled by conscious guilt, her crimes transformed every individual she met with, every thing she encountered, into objects to shrink from; even her own vile creatures were soon arrayed by her trembling fears in the terrible garb of perfidy. She roved from place to place, vainly striving to fly from justice, which still followed her in the miseries inflicted by her agonising apprehensions; and in the course of a very few years the accumulated horrors of her mind, aided by a continually broken rest, brought on a complication of almost every direful malady to which the human frame is incident By piece-meal, she at length expired in tortures so extreme, that, but for the magnitude of her crimes, the eye of pity must have wept for her; since, added to her bodily anguish, the catholic priest, to whom in her last moments she made her genuine

confession, recoiling from the black catalogue, and under the influence of horror and indignation, which the dreadful recital but too justly inspired, even in the most direful terms refused her absolution, and sent her tortured and dismayed spirit shrieking to another world, there to meet from an unerring judge its final doom.

CHAP. XVII.

To account for some things contained in Orlando's address to Victoria, in the coach which conveyed them from Montfort's château to St. Marguerite's, we must lead our reader back for a few moments to the Pyrenean castle.

A few evenings preceding that on which Orlando was suffered to convey Victoria from Don Manuel's castle, as he was roving through the aisles of the church for exercise, and in his own proper person still fondly hoping to meet our heroine, he suddenly saw a small ray of light gleam through the iron railing of the nave. Orlando had no fears, mental or personal, but those of the latter which prudence naturally inspired. The safety of his Victoria depended upon, his escaping the detection of all Don Manuel's people; and though he had been

well assured that church was unknown to them, he thought it possible that means as unforeseen as those which conducted Victoria there might lead some dangerous person thither: he therefore thought it advisable to conceal himself, lest it should be so; while his curiosity strongly prompted him to delay a little, and cautiously to observe the light, which, after seeming stationary for a length of time, suddenly disappeared.

Orlando now determined to retire; when as suddenly the light again was seen much stronger than before. Orlando paused; the rays of light increased, though slowly; and at length broken sighs and deep-drawn groans struck upon his ear, at once arousing pity, and strongly arresting his attention. In a moment more he beheld a knight, completely cased in black armour, emerging from behind a shrine, and bearing in his hand a lamp. With tottering and uneven steps he slowly advanced towards the place of Orlando's concealment. His visor was off, and Orlando beheld a countenance so cadaverous, that it almost taught him su-

perstitious fear; while, as the knight approached along the pavement, echo returned no sound of footsteps to Orlando's ear, and he saw the knight's armour stained in many places with new-shed blood.

At length, as with downcast looks this ghastly figure moved along, he struck against a pillar. The shock seemed to overpower him; he laid his lamp upon the slab of a monument, and rested against a pillar for support. Compassion delayed not to hear the voice of prudence: Orlando in an instant clasped the stranger in his arms, tenderly demanding wherein he could be of service to him. The lamp gleamed full upon our hero's face. The astonished knight looked up, and, uttering a cry partaking of surprise and horror, became at once senseless in the supporting arms of Orlando.

The consternation of this compassionate young man was now extreme. He doubted not but the stranger had been mortally wounded in a rencounter with some of Don Manuel's people, and had by miracle been led to seek refuge in that secret place, and now was dying without assistance—for Or-

lando had nothing for his relief, and feared to leave him to go in quest of any: but while in this dilemma, Nature, by a successful effort, restored the stranger's faculties; and at length opening his tearful eyes, he fixed them mournfully upon Orlando, while, in the hollow tone of sickness, and the deep voice of sorrow and despair, he spoke—

"Child of my abused benefactor! of my dreadfully injured friend! cease this humanity to a wretch deserving only thy contumely and abhorrence. Spurn me! revile me! but do not, do not, kindly treat me."

"Compose yourself, I entreat you, sir, and let me know how I can best be serviceable in a moment when you so greatly want assistance," said Orlando benignly, and grasping him with increased fervour—finding, by the stranger's movements, he meant to shrink from his supporting arms to the ground.

"Orlando!" replied Elfridii wildly; for this black knight, who had terrified Victoria in the library and on the stairs, was no other than Elfridii, who, though long considered by Pedro as convalescent, was often

by debility of frame, after severe penances and terrible retrospect, led back to the dreadful confines of insanity, if not quite to the calamity of actual derangement, when strange fantastic fancies would possess him of assuming in every respect both the appearance and character of those contrite sinners he had read or heard of, whose repentance and inflictions he was indefatigably imitating; amongst whom was a black knight, whose crimes had been as enormous, and whose contrition had been as profound, as Elfridii's own; and as his penances had been the most severe this wretched man had ever heard of, this black knight of the crescent, then, was the being he oftenest fancied himself to be, and in the assumed dress and appearance of whom he had alarmed many of the captives as effectually as he did our heroine, whom he purposely chased from the library to avail himself of the trap-door retreat to the vaults beneath; while the terror he occasioned her on the stairs was merely accidental, when, upon hearing her approach, he put on his visor, which resembled the face of a skeleton. The reason why no echo of his footsteps

could be heard was, that he never omitted to wear in the castle shoes soled with such a soft substance, that in his invisible rounds he was also unheard, and, when seen, no sound could lead pursuers to trace him to his cell—"Orlando, child of the murdered Viola!" said Elfridii, "you whom I have bereft of birth-right, of every hope and comfort under heaven, support me not; foster not the wily serpent that has insinuated his baleful poison through the vitals of thy whole race. Shrink from my noxious touch, and dash me to that earth which I have polluted with my crimes most horrible."

"If you have injured me," replied Orlando, "it is unknown to me; and, in a moment like this, believe me, I only wish to learn how I may most effectually assist you."

"If I have injured you!" Elfridii reiterated, "if I have injured you!—Oh that there was a doubt! Look, see, behold these wounds, this blood, inflicted, shed by my own guilty hands, struggling, if possible, by mortal means to expiate some of my direful crimes committed against Hea-

ven and thee! Then pity me not; but hate me, spurn me! spurn me!"

"Mortality prompted you to sin, but Heaven alone could inspire repentance such as yours; and dare I, a worm, an atom, withhold my pardon and assistance from him whom the Almighty has pitied and reclaimed?" said Orlando with energy. "Be comforted, good sire; cheer up, and teach me where to lead you. Let me support you hence. Let the son of him you called your friend, guided by the angel of peace, lead you to your couch, there smooth your pillow, and, under the auspices of both my blessed parents' approving influence, gain for you, by my best services and wishes, a sweet and calm repose."

"Oh God omnipotent!" exclaimed the before feeble Elfridii, starting, by an exertion scarcely human, from Orlando's grasp, and dropping upon his knees, "thy ways how merciful, how inscrutable! This boy, this forgiving angel, thou hast inspired and guided hither to hear my horrible confession; to receive from me all the atonement now,

alas! in my power to make." He arose from his knees with firmness. Orlando regarded him with awful attention.

"Follow, most amiable, most injured youth, the implacable destroyer of thy sainted mother, the perfidious friend of thy inestimable father, the baneful enemy of thy illustrious race. Follow, as Heaven directs thee, to my cell, there to receive papers invaluable to thee. They will lead thee to wealth and honours, to a father, whom even you, good and virtuous as you are, will kneel to with exulting pride."

"Gracious Providence! does my father indeed live? Am I so blessed to claim kindred with the good, and am I not the nephew and dependent of the villanous Vicenza?" exclaimed Orlando panting for breath, and well conjecturing this man to be the mysterious guardian of Matilda and himself, whom from time to time he had gathered some vague accounts of from Francisco.

"Your father's rank is amongst the most honourable of men; his station, amongst the highest of the Neapolitan nobility. With

Vicenza you claim no kindred ; he is a base usurper, vile as myself. Orlando ! oh look not thus so like thy angel mother, whom ———"

The sound of hasty footsteps now struck upon their ears. Orlando, turning to learn by whose approach they were interrupted, beheld Francisco.

"Theodore !" he exclaimed in breathless agitation, "you have outstaid your time. One moment more, Gonzalvo will be in your dungeon, and all your hopes destroyed for ever."

"Oh, how unfortunate !" exclaimed Orlando. "In what a moment am I compelled to go, just when about to obtain all that important knowledge my anxious heart has so long, so ardently panted for !"

"Gassendi," said Elfridii, "though you tear him from me now, you must by all our former friendship bring him to my cell to-morrow. My eternal welfare depends upon my confiding some secrets to his bosom. *Theodore*," he continued, and impressively he spoke the name *Theodore*, "farewell ! Repeat no word, no appella-

tion I have uttered, no, not even to *Sebastian*; and come to me to-morrow."

Orlando, informing Francisco how weak and ill conte Elfridii was, took a reluctant leave; and, with a heart swollen with disappointed hope, hastened to change his appearance, and returned to his dungeon in time to escape discovery.

Francisco, congratulating himself upon having arrived so opportunely to prevent the disclosure of any circumstance he wished our hero still to remain in ignorance of, led the agitated and languid Elfridii to his cell; where, with all the artful rhetoric he was master of, he strove to possess himself of those secrets Elfridii had been about to reveal to his *protégé*—but in vain; the subtile, though penitent, and often deranged conte, aware of the great partiality this versatile man felt for his lately discovered son, feared to confide in him such important secrets as the rank and injuries of the supposed Sebastian, Orlando, and Matilda. But, obdurate as Elfridii proved to the wishes of Francisco, the artful monk appeared not so to his, when he fervently im-

plored him, as he valued the eternal peace of a dying friend, to contrive the means for Sebastian's conveying a packet in safety from him to the pontiff at Rome.

Francisco offered to be himself the bearer of the packet; but, upon Elfridii's informing him that the ultimate welfare of his soul depended upon Sebastian's, and only Sebastian's, delivering the papers in question into his holiness's own hands, Francisco seemed to acquiesce, and unhesitatingly promised to do every thing within his power to forward his important wishes; while he secretly determined, could Sebastian's leaving the castle be safely accomplished, to accompany him; and, by some inquisitorial manœuvring, to possess himself of the packet; and, influenced by its contents, to act as should conduce most to the advantage of Don Manuel, without further injury to others. Thus resolved, Francisco hastened to his son with a plausible story of inquisitorial business calling him from the castle, in which Sebastian's knowledge of the Hebrew and living Oriental languages was wanted and demanded by

the Holy Office; and that he was authorised to promise, that no evil consequences should accrue to Don Manuel or his adherents from this short absence of Sebastian, who, attended throughout by a guard from the office, would have no means to escape or do mischief.

Francisco knew that, under the idea of its being the command of the Inquisition, the demanded leave of absence for Sebastian must be complied with; but had no conception of its being, as it was, so graciously and unconditionally acceded to;—not, gentle reader, out of fear or respect, but from a stronger motive which actuated Don Manuel, overpowered his usual prudence, and taught him almost to discover joy at the proposition. The absence of Francisco was at that period what he most ardently wished for; and, during the time he was informed this business must take up, he doubted not but he should be able to discover the asylum of Matilda, and to trepan her into his power.

To prevent Orlando from seeking out means for obtaining another interview with

Elfridii, Francisco informed him, that his mysterious guardian, after due consideration, had determined upon confiding in Sebastian only, whom in a few days subsequent he meant to send to Rome with important dispatches to his holiness; whither Orlando must hasten, after having placed Victoria in a safe asylum, and where he should, by Sebastian, be restored to his father and honourable society. Francisco too, fearing that, under the idea of that relationship which the awful visions of Orlando and Matilda pointed to, our hero might become importunate for taking Matilda under his own protection, now told him, that Elfridii had at length confessed he knew not that any relationship existed between his wards, and that he firmly believed Matilda to be an orphan, whose parents were both dead; but possibly the father of Orlando might solve the mystery.

Our reader is now acquainted with the reasons Orlando had for supposing the embassy of Sebastian to Rome was to place him in a situation that could claim alliance with the house of Ariosto; and anxious to

emerge from all that mystery (so ungenial to his nature) which had hitherto enveloped him, he had determined upon seeking Sebastian at Rome, as soon as signora Farinelli should arrive at St. Marguerite's to comfort and protect his beloved charge. But the dreadful and unequivocal revolution, so unpropitious to his hopes of happiness, which with grief and dismay he evidently saw her sentiments undergo during the little journey from the château to St. Marguerite's, which he attributed in some degree to the dictates of prudence, awakened by these suspicions his uncandid and mysterious appearances must create, led him to resolve upon not allowing any consideration to delay one instant his intended journey; and after solemnly giving Victoria into the care of the amiable prioress of St. Marguerite's, and in full confidence of father Pierre having a vigilant eye over her safety, he, with the venerable Anselmo, began his journey to Rome, attended by all that bitter anguish which the changed manner of Victoria, so chilling to all his fond hopes of happiness, had inflicted; and prov-

ing himself a dolorous companion to the reverend monk, they had reached Pisa on their way to Rome, where intelligence awaited Orlando which overwhelmed him with new afflictions.

In a few evenings after the escape of our heroine from the Pyrenean castle, as Lorenzo sat musing in his chamber with a heart torn by tender anxiety for the fate of the beloved fugitives, Elfridii, in the already described dress of the black knight of the crescent, and with a common visor on, suddenly appeared before the amazed duca. In visible agitation he laid a packet upon the table where the elbow of his injured friend rested, and without speaking as suddenly disappeared.

The moment Lorenzo's surprise permitted him, he took up this mysteriously-delivered packet, to examine it; when who can pourtray the different feelings that shook his agitated bosom when he beheld its superscription in the well-known characters of his still beloved friend! of whose perfidy, our reader knows, no suspicion had ever been led to his breast. Lorenzo could

scarcely believe the evidence of his senses:—was it possible that he again saw the writing of Elfridii? once more beheld a packet directed to "Lorenzo duca di Manfredonia?" Lorenzo wept for joy. And what a tumult were all the tender feelings of his soul worked into when his trepidation allowed him to break the seal, and he discovered a packet enclosed for his holiness, and in the envelope these words from the pen of Elfridii:—

"As you would escape from destruction, betray not your recognition of my writing. Be impenetrably silent respecting all knowledge of me.——You leave this accursed castle to morrow, never to return to it. Entrust no secret to the companion of your journey, and, as you value your safety, let not your name transpire. But, as your piety shall teach you to estimate the eternal salvation of a repentant sinner, preserve the inclosed as the most precious deposit the world can give you; nor part with it until you deliver it *yourself* into the pontiff's own hand. It will, oh Lorenzo! it will lead

you to liberty—to honourable society—to your amiable offspring—to all of happiness that a perfidious friend, the most accursed of villains, has left for you!"

The agitation of Lorenzo's susceptible mind kept him waking all night: he sought not his couch, nor once thought of repose; and in the morning, when Francisco appeared to tell him the moment for his departure was arrived, and that he was to be the companion of his journey, the astonished duca, oppressed and almost subdued by contending sensations, was scarcely equal to the task assigned him. However, he struggled hard to call forth all the powers of his mind to sustain him through the almost agonising conflict of hopes and fears, of doubts and amazement; and with Francisco he set out, attended by two officials, upon this important journey.

Francisco knew from Elfridii that he had himself delivered this mysterious packet to the supposed Sebastian; but had no conception that any other motive than a high idea of Sebastian's integrity had induced

his making him the bearer of this important trust, which he had some (to our reader immaterial) reasons for determining not to attempt possessing himself of until they should enter the pope's dominions.

This packet was not that which afterwards was so providentially confided to Victoria's care. This was merely a letter from Elfridii, who had once been the pontiff's most cherished friend, entreating his holiness by their former friendship immediately to secure the person of the bearer from every possible reach of treachery, and to have him treated with the utmost respect and humanity. To detain by his special authority Francisco Gassendi and his attendants at Rome; and to cut off all communication and correspondence between them and every individual, while his holiness should dispatch a legate to the Observantine monastery at Cadaques, with orders to be conducted from thence to the cave of father Francis, where the legate should then receive his (Elfridii's) momentous confessions, of the utmost importance to many innocent individuals, and to society in general.

Lorenzo, Francisco, and their attendants, travelled from Spain through France and part of Italy without accident of any kind, and as expeditiously as possible, until in going from Genoa towards Lucca their carriage was overturned, by which accident Francisco received so severe a concussion, that he was confined for some time at a convent near Lucca; by which means an express reached him much sooner than it otherwise could have done, from a convent at Junquera, where he had placed Matilda (secretly he believed) a few hours previous to his leaving home; and though scarcely recovered, he instantly set out with Sebastian and attendants for Pisa, from whence he determined to embark for Spain.

CHAP. XVIII.

GUZMAN, as anxious to outwit Francisco as Don Manuel was to gain Matilda into his power, was the minute observer of Francisco, who both he and Don Manuel supposed would not fail to visit the place of Matilda's concealment before he commenced so long a journey (for little did they imagine that her asylum had been within the precincts of the very castle which they inhabited): but this supposition led Guzman to redoubled vigilance in his observations of Francisco's movements, by which means Matilda's retreat in this new convent was discovered, and where she was allowed to remain some time unmolested, while Guzman set his ingenuity to work to project the mode for stealing her from thence.

Resuming once more the habit of a monk, Guzman found means to corrupt the too venal integrity of a lay-sister, who showed

the church of this monastery to strangers, and who, by her sanctity of manners, so far imposed upon the credulity of Matilda and some other young boarders in the convent, as one day to persuade them to remain in church after matins, to see a most extraordinary procession of pilgrims, who, on their way to Loretto, were to pay homage to the shrine of a particular saint in their convent church. These pilgrims were no other than Don Manuel, Guzman, and their associates, who seized the confederate sister and the terrified boarders, whom they gagged and bound to the pillars of the church, and then, unmolested, carried off Matilda, who had fainted upon the first of the commotion.

The alarming intelligence relative to Matilda, which the express contained, threw Francisco into the utmost consternation. He doubted not by whom she had been carried off; and although he wished at a future period to bestow her upon his son, he yet feared that son's intentions relative to her were now not as honourable as his own; and trembling for her safety, he immediately (though

scarcely recovered from the effect of his overturn) set out upon his return to Spain, accompanied by Sebastian, whom he would not have suffered to proceed without him; but who, though agitated and anxious as the billet of Elfridii could make a man of acute feelings, yet was so tenderly attached to Matilda, so interested for her fate, that, with intuitive fond solicitude, and without a murmur at his disappointment, he unhesitatingly gave up, for the present, all the flattering expectations he had in view; accompanied Francisco; and at Pisa, as before related by honest Thomas, accidentally encountered Orlando and his venerable companion; who, in despite of the veil which years and sorrows had clouded his face with, soon recognised his noble patron, his long lost friend, whose regretted remains he had firmly believed he had assisted to deposit in the sacred tomb of his ancestors, and whom so long he had mourned with all the sincerity of affection.

Orlando and Francisco were absent during their affecting and mutual recognition; and Lorenzo entreated his beloved friend Rinal-

do to conceal, with the utmost circumspection, all knowledge of him; for his safety, which was enveloped in much danger and mystery, depended upon his name and rank being still unknown. Rinaldo promised compliance; yet resolved never to lose sight of his noble friend, and to use his utmost endeavours, through the power of the church, to have him restored to rank and to society.

The anguish of Orlando's mind was dreadfully augmented by the alarming intelligence of Matilda, which Francisco imparted to him. The horrid apprehensions but too justly entertained for that hapless young woman's fate, with the accusations he failed not to upbraid himself with for not having more firmly exerted his influence over Francisco to obtain leave for her to accompany Victoria in her flight, all the agony of uncertainty his mind was tortured with, relative to his now almost blighted hopes of happin es with Victoria, drove him into a state of mental anguish pitiable to behold; when the only shape in which consolation seemed to reach his heart was from the magic of that handker-

chief he had taken from Thomas. It had belonged to Victoria, and he fondly cherished it. It was now all within his reach that had ever been hers, and it possessed that power over his mind which affection in absence gifts every trifle with. Reason cannot define how the possession of such a trivial thing could convey the balm of comfort to the heart of a man depressed with a variety of cares: but the attributes of Love and Reason are often found to differ widely, and the lover derives pleasure and pain from causes which would puzzle poor Reason to account for.

It was late in the evening when Lorenzo and his companions reached Cadaques. Francisco, after dismissing his attendants, disguised Lorenzo, Rinaldo, Orlando, and Thomas, in sacerdotal habits, and then left them, with a command to be at his cave in the forest at midnight. Guzman, in one of his Proteus forms, saw and recognised them upon their arrival in Catalonia. He watched all their movements; and, by his wary manœuvring, Lorenzo, Rinaldo, and our hero, were dragged from the goat-herd's hut

to the castle, where they were instantly given into the custody of the arch-fiend Garcias. Rinaldo was immediately conveyed to one of the common dungeons; Lorenzo, loaded with chains and contumely, to the south tower; while for Orlando, now completely in his power, the infernal wretch planned a more diabolical revenge.

The noxious thorns of ancient animosity rankled with renewed virulence in the breast of Garcias, aided by the venom of new causes for deadly hate. Matilda, in the phrensy of her grief, had betrayed the secret of the fictitious Hippolyto and the supposed Theodore uniting in the person of Victoria's gallant deliverer.

The black heart of Garcias, boiling with all the venom of deadly hate and vengeance, had the unfortunate Orlando dragged without mercy to the terrible tube, whither he had not suffered himself quietly to be taken. In his desperate resistance, he had severely wounded some of the ruffians, and in return received a slight wound, round which he providentially bound Victoria's handkerchief that he carried in his bosom. Numbers,

however, prevailed over his now desperate valour; and in the scuffle that took place while they were forcibly fastening him in the iron chair, the marked corner of the handkerchief was rent off by the jags of some part of the surrounding iron-work.

Linked by chains to two desperate bravos, he was first precipitated down the dreadful tube, and then dragged to his most horrible prison; where, with the accustomed food, bread and water, he was fastened in, and left to deplore the unheard-of cruelty of his fate. The agony of his mind soon brought on a malignant fever. Without medicinal aid, without assistance in any shape from mortal, he was left by his diabolical and implacable foe to struggle with disease: but he had help of which the power of Garcias could not bereave him, and Nature's great guide decreed that she should bear Orlando safely through his dreadful malady. The crisis was past, and Reason (though not yet speech) was fast re-assuming her empire, when Almighty Providence conducted the footsteps of our heroine to his direful prison.

The consternation and dismay of Francisco were extreme when his expected friends arrived not at the appointed time: he had too much reason to fear for them, and he had now to tremble for their fate as well as for Matilda's. Morning arrived without their appearance, and apprehension almost tortured him to phrensy. Every inquiry which his alarmed imagination or agonised feelings could suggest he now set on foot: his mind and frame were harassed by exertions scarcely human. Every power that virtue or vice could yield him were now called forth, but, alas! without effect; neither of the fate of his lost friends, or of Matilda, appeared one single trace within his eager penetrating eye.

Matilda by this time had been conveyed to the north tower, partly to elude the vigilance of Francisco, and partly to intimidate her into a compliance with Don Manuel's proposals. The barbarous Garcias, meaning to work upon her feelings in every shape, had inhumanly told her, that Urbino (whom he, as well as on Manuel, believed her to be in love with) was, with her friend

Sebastian, then in their power, and unfeelingly assured her that both these, her dear friends, should suffer every species of cruelty, and death at length in its most direful form, if she did not, within a very few days, assent to become the wife of Don Manuel, to whom her mother, in her last moments, had bequeathed her.

But Matilda, after some hours of agonising agitation, and deep reflection, disbelieved all these horrid threats. Well she knew, from Orlando, all the misery they had inflicted upon Victoria to terrify her into conte Vicenza's toils, and she now firmly felt persuaded that the same plans were to be pursued to work upon her terrors; and though dreadfully convinced by the piteous groans of Sebastian, which struck direfully upon her heart during her imprisonment, that he at least was in their power, she still doubted the intention of Garcias to commit all the cruelty he had denounced against her friends, and resolved, upon her next interview with Don Manuel, to tell him she had developed his designs, and that no real or threatened cruelty should ever

terrify her into becoming his wife. But Don Manuel she never more beheld; and the agitation of her susceptible mind, with want of sustenance for two whole days, reduced her to that state in which Victoria discovered her.

In the intermediate time the ardent search of the agonised Francisco was unremitting, as it was successless. Garcias, with dreadful imprecations denying all knowledge of those he sought, in pursuit of his own revenge, braved even the vengeance of the Inquisition, with which Francisco threatened him if he longer concealed Theodore and Sebastian. Don Manuel too, insensible to his father's anguish, his tears, his supplications, his threats, firmly denied their or Matilda's being in his power. Terrible were now the daily disputes between the father and the son; and in dreadful wrath they parted from each other, determined to meet no more, the morning of that day upon which Francisco was summoned to his seat in the inquisitorial tribune, from which his agony of mind had led him to absent himself for the first three days of the convention be-

ing called, little thinking how deeply he was concerned in the business agitated there; and now the deposition of Thomas and Diego too fatally convinced the agonised father that his son (now in this dreadful moment become dear to his heart as ever) could no longer hope to escape the punishment due to his enormous offences. He trembled, he sickened, and with difficulty restrained the violence of his agitation.

Confined by the duty of his high station in the Inquisition to the courts of the Holy Office, and surrounded by spies and enemies in every direction (for one of the attending evils of this dreadful synod was, that each inquisitor had as much to fear from his brother's enmity, as the wretched victims of their power had from them all combined; and beside this, great jealousies and animosities then raged between the Dominican and Observantine monks of Cadaques), Francisco could not obtain one single moment to escape to his cell to announce to the devoted community of the castle the destruction that awaited them, or rather which was about to fall, even in the next moment, upon

them, until the dreadful troop were all in the forest upon their march to the castle. Then did the agonised father, availing himself of the impenetrable darkness of the night, steal from the silent and tremendous phalanx, and, rushing through the caverns, sound the dreadful alarm upon the gong; then flying to the parlour, where his dismayed son was, imparted to him that terrible intelligence which his haggard looks, inquisitorial habit, and distracted appearance, but too horribly authenticated; then giving his farewell benediction, and a last tender embrace to the appalled Ambrosio, fled back. But in the hall finding the aged Teresa in a swoon, and not then forgetful of humanity, he bore her in his arms to the chamber so long appropriated to Sebastian, and there leaving her upon the bed, still in her state of insensibility, retreated back to the awful roop, unnoticed took his silent station amidst the forces of the rear, and unsuspected pursued his way to the castle, where to every thing and every transaction he was now to appear a stranger.

In all that horror and dismay his dreadful

situation awakened, the unhappy Manuel announced to his adherents the almost instantaneous arrival of inevitable destruction. "They were betrayed, and an unconquerable force of the Inquisition even then entering the secret passes of the castle."

Horrid consternation now spread its debilitating influence over all the once brave associates. In a moment like this, the guilty could only tremble. Self-possession fled from all. None knew how to act for the general safety; nor was there then time for arrangements, nor sufficient power within the castle to attempt contention. To fly was all of security now left them; and believing there was only time for personal retreat, they abandoned at once all that mass of treasure they had waded through every crime, and bartered their eternal happiness, to attain, and unhesitatingly left it to the mercy of a community full as rapacious, and little more equitable than their own.

Of all the retreating troop of villains Don Manuel certainly was the most collected; yet so far did the terror of inquisitorial tortures operate upon his hitherto cou-

rageous soul, that, in the moment of providing for his own personal safety, he forgot Matilda, her whom he fancied he fervently loved, nor once remembered her until too late to attempt, with impunity, her rescue from the dreadful, and what he thought inevitable, death impending over her in her secret prison.

Garcias, with conte Vicenza (then scarcely recovered from his wound), took refuge in the deep recess of a secret cavern amongst the rocks upon the sea-shore, from whence for six-and-thirty hours they dared not venture. At length impelled by hunger, and finding that pursuit had not traced them to that asylum, they determined to embark in a boat they saw lying at anchor a short distance from their retreat, and trust to the mercy of the waves for wafting them to some more secure and comfortable place of refuge. But, even in this anxious moment of peril, these truly diabolical and incorrigible villains resolved to perpetrate one more fell crime before they fled from Spain for ever. Polydore, previous to his leaving the castle, had learned from his agents in France of the

marriage of Victoria; and although believing the supposed Theodore to be his own son, vice held such empire over his heart, that jealousy and rage wound him into a thirst for vengeance, even equal to the vindictive Garcias.

Garcias was well acquainted with a shallow near the recess which sheltered them, where at low-water they could gain a safe entrance to the prison of their intended victim. Together then these remorseless assassins went, fully bent upon their sanguinary purpose, and entered the cavern shortly after Victoria had been guided by Providence to the dungeon of her husband. The eye of Omnipresence was fixed upon them, but they felt not its influence; unawed they reached the prison door, and there they paused, tortured with every pang of disappointed vengeance; but soon awakened to dæmoniacal joy by the conviction of their devoted victim having not escaped them. Though wondering why the dungeon door was open, and Theodore still there, they madly rushed forward to glut their vengeance in his noble heart; when in the dreadful moment that

their hands were raised to give the mortal blow, the bleeding form of Viola stood before them. Such power did the Almighty suffer the guilt of conscience to assume over their heated imaginations. The pale and ghastly Victoria, with every horror of her mind delineated upon her speaking countenance, was in that terrible moment a faithful portrait of the dying Viola. Chilled by the power of supernatural awe, the weapon of death fell from the nerveless hands of the assassins, and the strong and appalling delusion chased them from that dismaying place: shaking with terror, and tortured by every horror, they fled to the boat, which, guided by divine ordination, ultimately bore these sanguinary wretches to destruction.

CHAP. XIX.

FRANCISCO, notwithstanding the violent asseverations of Don Manuel and Garcias, still firmly believed that Orlando and Lorenzo were confined within the precincts of the castle; and as he well knew Elfridii had revealed to Garcias some secret places of imprisonment and torture, invented and formed by the Turks who had inhabited that castle, and which he could never be prevailed upon to impart to him, he resolved upon taking our heroine to the chamber of Elfridii, whom he had not visited since his hasty return from Italy. He had every reason to believe, from all that had occurred in their late conversations, that the conte had some invincible reasons for not imparting to him any of the secrets his mind laboured with, and the only hope he now feared he had left was centred in Victoria. In her presence he would announce to Elfridii the

dreadfully mysterious disappearance of Theodore and Sebastian; and the pleadings of her youth, her fascinations, her affection for Theodore, Francisco believed the conte would find resistless, and that the magic of her charms would at once dispel all the clouds of secresy that had hitherto so thickly enveloped Elfridii.

Fearing the eyes of observation should he lead Victoria through the church, or any part of the castle known to the Officials, Francisco determined to conduct her through those horrid caverns known only to himself, Elfridii, Don Manuel, and Garcias, and which led alike to the tomb of Viola and the castle treasury. For many hours preceding that appointed for his meeting Victoria, Francisco had been brooding over the calamities that too probably awaited all those so dear to his affections. Grief, disappointment, uncertainty, and anticipated evil, had worked his susceptible feelings into such a state of gloom, almost approaching to despair, that justice and humanity seemed chased from their seat; and this versatile character, in sullen malignity, almost ripe

for any act of desperation, led our heroine through those scenes of horror, rather deriving satisfaction from than pitying her natural terrors; for so savage, so misanthropic had the despondency of his mind at that period made him, that he looked then upon Victoria with the most envenomed deadly hate, as the cause of all he suffered; and vainly then did his better feelings whisper how innocently she had caused those evils which wrung his soul and warped it from humanity; and the almost phrensied state of his mind more than once inspired the horrid thought of satiating his vindictive feelings in the murder of Victoria: but still his better thoughts would interpose to moderate his passions, and, by lessening his hatred and injustice, now and then obtain for her a softened thought or word.

The wretched Sanguinario had been placed in that comfortless and desolate spot, by the policy of Garcias, to terrify any person, whether led that way by chance or by design, from venturing further towards the treasury. Francisco conjecturing that the flight of Garcias might have left this miser-

able creature without a supply of food, took some provision for him, in the basket he had provided with nourishment for those he faintly hoped this visit to Elfridii would prove the means of leading him to find.

The reiterated yells of Sanguinario, the deriding repetition of her own shriek, with the soft whisper, and the loud and low responses from above, were all the magical work of echo, from the extraordinary, though hidden, but natural effect of sound in that wide range of cavern chambers, as they varied their situation in them.

The chamber of death was in fact the entrance to the treasury, and the strange characters upon the door were caused by the effect of torch-light upon fossils placed there, as all the horrid machinery of the chamber was for the purpose of terrifying any invader who might discover the treasury, and rashly attempt to enter it.

A wonderfully ingenious artificer of Geneva, who was conveying a mechanical exhibition from his own country to Naples, unfortunately fell into the hands of these rapacious pirates. The barbarian Garcias,

availing himself of this hapless citizen's talents, employed him to make all that machinery which struck Victoria with such fearful amazement in that chamber. An adjoining cell was appropriated for working all this mechanism in; and the moment all was fully completed, the arch-fiend Garcias confined the ill-fated unsuspecting artisan for life within that lonely cell, to work his own machinery, with every dreadful threat of the infliction of the most horrible species of torture, should it fail to act upon the entrance of any one. The moment foot-steps approached the door, an unerring sound was faithfully conveyed to the cell to call its wretched inhabitant to his operation, which he was compelled to aid with his own voice, and to sing while his heart was bursting with anguish; and so frequently did Garcias go thither to watch his vigilance, and so fearful was the miserable captive of some more dreadful punishment, that he never once failed in the task assigned him.

The illuminations of the altar were, like the characters upon the door, caused by the reflexion of strong light upon minerals; and

when the automaton raised the dart, it was powerfully charged with electric matter, to fall heavily upon that rash being who, deriding such apparent terrors, should attempt to pass on to the treasury.

Although well acquainted with every secret of this chamber, Francisco's mind was so occupied by other matters of importance, that he not once thought of the uplifted dart; but eagerly anxious to reach Elfridii's chamber, he passed too near, and received a shock that for some time deprived him of all sense and motion. Upon his recovery and missing Victoria, guided by the lantern her humanity left him, he traced her footsteps imprinted upon the sandy soil of the chamber to the door through which she had retreated, and full of rage and vengeance followed her to the chamber of Elfridii.

The dreadful sepulchre through which Victoria passed we have already explained, and the corse she fell over was a wretched traveller who had been massacred in the forest; but not quite dead when precipitated into that dreadful place, he had, guided by a ray of light which emanated through the

door of Elfridii's apartment, feebly crawled to the passage in quest of assistance; where overcome by exertion and loss of blood, he shortly after expired.

Elfridii rapidly declined after the night upon which he delivered the packet to the duca di Manfredonia. The shock he received upon beholding his unsuspecting friend, the victim of his matchless perfidy, with the dreadful anxiety he endured for the success of Lorenzo's journey, were more than his debilitated frame could sustain. Daily, nay almost hourly, he found his strength decreased; and the terror he now suffered lest he should be unable to reach Francisco's cave at the time he calculated for the pope's legate to be there, assisted in reducing him to that very state he dreaded. At length, with inexpressible horror, he found himself so completely enervated, that with painful difficulty could he make the last exertion he was ever able to accomplish, that of regaining the packet he had so carefully buried near the grave of Viola; and with these momentous papers once more in his possession,

he crawled back to his dreary cell, and passed his time in fervent prayers to Heaven "not to forsake the house of Manfredonia, but to guide some friend to virtue thither to receive from his hand the confession of his dreadful crimes."

Stretched upon his miserable stone couch, deprived of every comfort, even now no longer able to obtain the small portion of homely food he had long allowed himself (for he had no attendant, and was now unable to go in quest of sustenance), he spent the last few days of his life in agonies of mind and frame, which we find it impossible to delineate. At length his supplications were attended to. Almighty Providence guided Victoria di Modena to his cell, to receive from him the precious packet, which had it not been so ordained must have fallen into the hands of Francisco, who, for his own safety and that of his beloved son, would have concealed almost every part of its important contents, and, where it was possible, would have turned every incident to the advantage of Don Manuel and his

own ambitious schemes: and here too, by this merciful ordinance, Victoria was permitted to discover a clue which ultimately led her to the preservation of the innocent sufferers she so anxiously sought.

CHAP. XX.

From the time Victoria's arduous undertakings had so happily terminated, the joyful feelings of the versatile Francisco were almost too great for concealment; yet so critical was his situation, that he feared to approach the chambers of his friends, or even to announce himself to Diego. Minutely had he searched the apartment and effects of the late Elfridii; but among many papers nothing could he find relative to our hero's birth, or any one circumstance respecting him or his other *protégée* Matilda. At length his impatience to see Orlando, and his wish to communicate all his fears and disappointments to this beloved youth, urged him to conquer his dread of detection, and led him to risk an interview.

But still wishing, if possible, to prevent discovery, he dropped that paper through a trap-beam from the apartment above, at

the moment when Alphonso had struck the feeling heart of Orlando with the dreadful supposition that Matilda entertained an affection for him yet more tender than friendship; and this billet had nearly awakened as much inquietude and jealousy for his sister's peace in the ardent mind of Alphonso, as that delivered by Diego, avowedly from Matilda, had before done. All the pangs which appearances then created were as unfounded as the present; for Matilda wrote to inform Orlando, that she had every reason to apprehend that Francisco had fled with the vile associates of the castle, and with him every clue to his birth or her own.

The painful impression this unexpected intelligence made, with all the tumult of dreadfully agonising fears, that the flight of Francisco might blight all his hopes of emerging from the mystery which inveloped him, and prevent his daring to present himself as a suitor to Victoria—with the still flattering persuasion, that Sebastian had preserved the mysterious packet for his holiness, and by that means he might yet be led to happiness, awakened all those emo-

tions which stole suspicion into the ingenuous mind of conte Ariosto.

This interview with Francisco aroused new griefs, new doubts and perplexities, in the breast of Orlando. The shock his mind sustained from the news of his mysterious guardian's death, with all the disappointments attending Francisco's search amongst the papers of the deceased, were almost too much for his feeble frame to sustain. All his fondest expectations were now indeed most cruelly threatened; the only hope he had to rest upon was the packet in Sebastian's care:—and while thus painfully, thus delicately situated, honour forbade all communication with Alphonso or Victoria; and his agonised heart only found consolation in the society of Sebastian, which he eagerly sought the moment he was able to leave his chamber, and to whom he faithfully imparted all those secrets which wrung his heart with anguish.

The duca di Manfredonia, now released from captivity, and the free agent of his own will, hesitated not to confide in his beloved pupil his name and rank; and,

though unconscious of the real claims this dear youth had upon him, determined to adopt him as his son, and to hasten the mo ment his health permitted to Rome, to reinstate himself in his long-bereaved rank and possessions, and to deliver that packet to the pontiff supposed to be of so much consequence to Orlando.

Matilda too Lorenzo determined to provide for and protect; but, not having so high an idea of her prudence as he had of Orlando's, had forborne to explain himself to her: who, fearing she had for ever lost the guardianship of Francisco (as he had commanded Orlando to conceal his being in the castle from Matilda, and every other individual), from some secret pleadings clung to Victoria for protection, though not doubting the friendship of Theodore or Sebastian; and, independent of other feelings, she still considered the auspices of Victoria the most honourable, the most eligible, she could obtain.

At the request of the duca di Manfredonia, Alphonso and Victoria postponed their intended departure from the castle of

the Pyrenees, until renovated health and other circumstances permitted him and his children to accompany them. In a very few days after those interesting and affecting discoveries which the important confessions of Elfridii made, the pious resignation of the amiable Lorenzo inspired him with a sufficient degree of fortitude to undertake his last sad, solemn, heart-rending duties to the manes of his adored, ill-fated, inestimable Viola.

Alone he first visited her unhallowed sepulchre; and for ever sacred be the sorrows of the real mourner! Lorenzo, thy griefs could only be equalled by the firmness with which thou didst bear them; and we will not dare to disturb thee in that moment of anguish, which only prayer could lessen; nor shall we attempt to unveil those feelings which in this awful visit tortured and poured balm into thy wounded heart!

In a few subsequent days fathers Rinaldo and Pierre, with the other monks of St. Lewis, and all the principal ones of the different orders in Cadaques, removed with due solemnity all that now remained of the

once beauteous, accomplished, and virtuous Viola to the nave of the castle church, where all the nuns and choirs of the neighbouring monasteries attended to chant requiems, and join in all the awful solemn rites the catholic persuasion called for over a murdered corse redeemed from an unhallowed grave.

Lorenzo's never-extinguished tenderness for his defamed Viola would not now suffer him to witness the affecting scene; but Victoria, at his most earnest entreaty, attended, to aid with her voice those requiems which, from the purity of her devotion, he said would sooner ascend to heaven. Though almost subdued by the poignancy of her own feelings, she could not refuse to comply with his wishes. She joined the choir; and in one line of solo, which it was in her part to sing, the excess of her sensibility, the fervor of her piety, led her to breathe cadences of such thrilling pathos, such touching melody, that every auditor was at once subdued by the sensations the magic of her expression forcibly awakened. The choir, bound by the spell, had not power

immediately to join in chorus; and for many minutes a total silence would have reigned, had it not been broken by the loud sobs of a numerous congregation, moved by the magic of sweet sounds to weep for the fate of her whom very few of them had ever seen: while a monk of the Carthusian order, who had fixed his station near the coffin, and who had hitherto evinced, by tears and sighs, the most painful emotion, now burst from the weeping throng, and rushed from the church, convulsed with anguish. No wonder, then, that Viola's own child should feel! Orlando, in dreadful agitation, quitted the church; and, flying for once from the fascinating voice of his Victoria, strove by every exertion of his mind to moderate his sensibility; and then sought his sister, whom he found seated at her father's chamber-door. Matilda would not intrude upon her parent's grief; but, watchful of him, she stationed herself within the reach of sound, and, as she wept for the fate of her mother, echoed every heart-rending sigh that burst from the agonised bosom of her father.

From the church was the body of Viola conveyed on board a galleon granted by the Spanish admiralty for the purpose. The state-cabin was hung with all the insignia of woe, for the reception of the body; and over the Spanish colours a black flag was hoisted, escutcheoned with the armorial bearings of the houses of Manfredonia and Palermo. Lorenzo, his children, with Alphonso, Victoria, and all their different adherents, attended the manes of this victim of unmerited vengeance upon this mournful voyage to Naples; quitting for ever that castle, where in misery and bondage many a virtuous being had lingered.

On their way to Naples they touched at the port of Leghorn; from whence fathers Rinaldo and Pierre made as expeditious a journey as possible to Rome, where they laid the dreadful confessions of the late Elfridii before the pontiff; who immediately dispatched his nuncio, with proper attendants and credentials, along with these holy fathers, to the court of Naples, to arrange every necessary for a pompous reception of the body of Viola, and to have in-

stant restitution made of the long-usurped possessions of Manfredonia and Palermo.

The remains of the lovely unfortunate Viola were therefore received upon landing by one of the most magnificent processions that ever thronged the streets of Naples. For three days the body lay in all the state of catholic ceremonies, in the church of St. Rosolia, where masses and chants were hourly said and sung for the repose of her soul: and at the expiration of that period, all that remained of this once beauteous fragrant flower, "nipped by an untimely frost," was conveyed for interment from Naples to the family mausoleum at Manfredonia; attended through Naples, and for many miles out of the city, by the same magnificent procession of all the religious, and all the equipages belonging to the court and to the nobility of Naples, which had received it from its marine conveyance: for, although so many years had elapsed since the family had been believed extinct, so revered was still the name of Manfredonia, so indelibly had the virtues of that noble race been enrolled upon a tablet of never-fading fame, that

every Neapolitan was eager to evince respect and pay attention to a family so villanously estranged, so miraculously restored to them.

The long-oppressed and ruined peasantry of Manfredonia, now no longer able to clothe themselves in respectable mourning, decked out with cypress, rosemary and yew came forth to meet their ruefully-lamented, beloved, ancient lord. Despoiled by the depressive tyranny of the usurper of every comfort under heaven, and well remembering the blessings they had enjoyed when vassalage was lightened by the benign and cheering influence of sweet benevolence and philanthropy, the old inspired the young with all their feelings, by tradition of past happiness, united to those awakened by the knowledge of present suffering.

The restoration of that adored, lamented family was to their anticipating hopes the instantaneous change of direful slavery, and every human misery, to each blessing the world could supply. The sudden transition from long habitual despair to hope and joy broke through every bound of modera-

tion: their rapture was enthusiasm: their happiness evinced itself in wildest tumult, in shouts of transport, in frantic gestures, in shrieks of ecstasy; nor could the efforts of the holy fathers of the neighbouring convents, who set out in solemn procession with the phrensied throng, check the excesses of their turbulent joy, which broke through all restraint, until they beheld the first of that party their eager eyes strained with ardor to behold. It was the *bara* with the body of their once adored respected lady, who had been stolen from them, and basely traduced and murdered by those who had bereaved them of every comfort; and the tumult of joy instantly gave way to a burst of agonised ungovernable grief.

The before solemn procession from Naples was now thrown into the utmost confusion. The young enthusiasts hastened to unyoke the horses, for the honour of themselves drawing the carriages of those they had been taught to love and to regret; while the hysteric sobs and cries of the old women, and piteous groans of the aged men, as they surrounded the hearse, mingled

with the shouts of joy and tears of pleasure shed, as all in succession thronged round the carriage of Lorenzo to behold once more their beloved basely-injured lord, rent the air and the bleeding bosoms of those they meant to welcome; while the squalid misery of their emaciated appearance awakened every feeling of pity for the oppression that had thus direfully changed the aspect of this once healthy and happy peasantry.

The effect which such a scene as this must have upon the susceptible heart of Lorenzo, with his feelings upon his return to the castle of his ancestors after such an absence, would baffle the attempts of more experienced and abler historians than ourselves to delineate. So fine, so lovely, so delicate of texture are some of the touches of the human heart, that imagination can only just conceive them; but Nature's own hand alone could trace them. Those of our readers who have known affliction will find in their own prompt fancy a lively sketch of Lorenzo's sensations; but such as have culled the sweets from the roses of life, without

one wound from its thorns, will easily forgive our passing them over, as well as our omitting a particular account of the interment of the lovely unfortunate Viola, who was now laid in the peaceful tomb of her husband's ancestors, nineteen years after the assassin's hand had sent her pure spirit to a better world.

As soon after the interment of his Viola as his unfeigned grief would allow Lorenzo to think of any thing but her, he took the necessary measures to secure to himself and posterity, without the possibility of future litigation, his long dormant titles and usurped estates; and after appointing men of approved integrity and abilities to superintend the management of his deranged affairs, and to take into speedy consideration the ruined state of his vassals, with strict injunctions to do all that humanity could suggest for their immediate and effectual relief, he accompanied his children and Alphonso to the castle of Palino. Yet even here busy memory spared him not many a bitter agonising pang; while the ardent, hospitable,

cheerful, and affectionate Alphonso strove with all his might to banish sorrow from the bosom of his guests.

To his steward conte Ariosto had dispatched orders from Naples for the arrangement of the splendid celebration of his sister's nuptials, and of his own majority; so that every preparation was in great forwardness when the party arrived at Palino: and as Alphonso's leave of absence from his regiment was nearly expired, and Orlando was not very much averse from expedition upon the occasion, our hero and heroine's union, with Alphonso's coming of age, was celebrated with all that magnificence their rank in life demanded, very shortly after their arrival in Tuscany.

For several succeeding days the festivities continued; but at length the chilling hand of separation intervened to damp their joy. The inevitable moment of Alphonso's departure arrived, and sadness reigned in every breast. He lived in the affection of all his guests; and regret and sorrow filled up for a time the void his absence made: and her ill-concealed grief

upon this occasion first betrayed to Orlando and his Victoria that secret which Matilda had flattered herself would ever remain intombed within the impenetrable recesses of her own bosom.

CHAP. XXI.

Our heroine, now sheltered within the fostering arms of her adoring husband, surrounded by friends, protectors, affluence, and happiness, in every direction, had nothing to call for the energies of her mind, and to catch from exertion the appearance of strength. It was therefore too soon visible to all her anxiously-attentive observers, that severe and formidable was the shock her constitution had received from the dreadful conflicts it had been her singular fate to sustain. The terrible effect of all the horrors, toils, sickness, and griefs, which had so unremittingly assailed her, seemed now to burst at once upon her in this moment of completed happiness; and, independent of other alarming symptoms of languor and ill health, her nervous system appeared so shaken, that the once intrepid Victoria trembled at every sound; and at the

approach of night expected, with horrid apprehension, the realising of every terrific vision the distempered fancy of dismay and superstition could create.

Orlando, almost distracted with agonising apprehensions, summoned father Pierre back from Provence, and sent off an express to Murcia to search out Pedro de Valdivieso; while all the faculty of eminence which Naples, Rome, and the surrounding provinces could boast, were collected round her; who all declared that medicine, and the air of his own particular residence, alone could save her. Victoria laughed at these interested prescriptions, but promised her almost heart-broken Orlando, and his little less agonised father, to adhere most faithfully to the advice of Pierre and Pedro.

The holy father arrived as speedily as possible, and was quickly convicted of the most egregious ignorance by the before-assembled sons of Æsculapius; for he advised a tour to all the gayest scenes in Europe; considering a constant succession of amusement likely to engage her fancy, with a quick change of scene, where her mind

could have little opportunity of reverting to the past, aided by perpetual variation of air, the exercise of travelling, and some gentle alteratives, by far the most likely means of re-establishing that health which mental suffering had affected.

The Italian physicians, handsomely rewarded for their trouble by the liberal Orlando, stalked off in great dudgeon, highly reprobating Victoria's infatuation and the absurd monk's ignorance: and as Pierre's prescriptions were thought by Victoria to promise some relief to the deep wounds of Lorenzo's mind, she more readily agreed to the projected tour; and with her husband, his father and sister, the good monk Pierre, with Ursuline, Roselia, Diego, and a suitable retinue, she set out to visit all the places whither fancy or curiosity chose to lead her, both in the islands and continent of Europe. For almost two years they were wandering; and when again they returned to Manfredonia, the sweetest smiles of nature, fate, and fortune, bade them welcome. Sorrow no longer was there: the peasantry, blest again under the auspices of humanity, were jo-

cund and healthy; Victoria was perfectly recovered; her husband one of the happiest of mankind; Lorenzo cheered by the felicity of his children; and the sweet smiles of hope lit up its gentle radiance in the bosom of Matilda: for the war in which Spain had been recently engaged was ended, and Alphonso was at the castle of Manfredonia to receive the wanderers.

During this tour, in which Matilda was first introduced to the great and busy world, she clearly saw the homage paid to her charms was trifling and transient compared to that degree of admiration the marchesa di Palermo excited in every court they visited. At the moment they first appeared each seemed to be equally admired; or, if, in favour of either, lady Matilda's vanity might feel most flattered: but too soon she had the mortification of perceiving each word, each look, each movement of Victoria obtaining for her new votaries; and at length all flocked to pay homage at her shrine, leaving Matilda comparatively unnoticed. Even the trifling incumbrance annexed to the marchesa, a beloved and

adoring husband, appeared no impediment to love and admiration in many of the licentious courts they visited: and though dignified the repulses of the virtuous marchesa, and well known as were the incontestable proofs which she had given of the tenderness of her attachment to Orlando, the fascination of her manners riveted the chains her artless beauty forged; and, though without a ray of hope to cheer them, innumerable inamoratos sighed around her, while few in comparison were the lvers Matilda had to boast of.

The observation of all this, added to the recollection of the high estimation in which conte Ariosto held his sister, led Matilda to study the captivating graces of Victoria's mind and manners, and by them to attempt new modelling her own; while our heroine too, aware of lady Matilda's unavoidable deficiencies, and of her attachment to Alphonso, would often, as if without any particular meaning, speak of those feminine graces and accomplishments her brother most admired, and point out in many a court belle the defects or perfections most likely to

disgust or captivate Alphonso. Not an iota of this was lost upon Matilda. She exerted all the powers of her strong mind and genius to become what conte Ariosto must approve; so that, when she returned to Manfredonia, her manners were so softened, so polished, so delicately refined; her accomplishments so striking, that Alphonso, no longer under the influence of prejudice, wondered how he could have been so long blind to such dazzling perfections; and believing that he had hitherto been unjust, by way of some atonement became as anxious as Matilda herself could wish him to search out all those amiable as well as alluring qualities which she now so eminently possessed; and in a very few months Matilda had the happiness of finding that she was not doomed to sigh away her life in hopeless love. Conte Ariosto's heart became all her own; and Lorenzo with transport bestowed his child upon the amiable son of his beloved lamented friends, Altidore and Clementina. The joy of Victoria and her Orlando upon this occasion was excessive; and the subsequent happiness of Alphonso

and Matilda gave them no cause for regret, as they remembered the auspicious day that amiable and beloved pair were united.

To say that the duca di Manfredonia passed the remainder of his days in perfect happiness would be to depreciate the sensibility of his feeling heart. His misfortunes had been such as time could not lessen. The calamitous fate of his Viola hung heavily upon his heart, and the balm of religion only could soften his sorrows. Though dreadful was the real fate of the innocent beloved being his bosom bled for, the more terrible belief of her having by crimes deprived herself of an asylum among the blest was happily removed from his long tortured mind; and that horror which for years had wrung every fibre of his soul with anguish was chased by the rapturous conviction of her immaculate purity. Viola's name was again venerated by the world; and with exulting pride (though mingled with the softening pangs of fond regret) he could talk to his children of their mother—to Victoria of her counterpart.

Tranquil, though not happy, glided on

the evening of Lorenzo's days; respected by the world, esteemed by his friends, loved by his vassals, and adored by his duteous children, from whose undiminished felicity, and from watching over the dawning reason of his lovely and promising grand-children, he derived all of happiness the world could now bestow upon him. But, if ever the simplicity of heart and striking virtues of his beloved Victoria reminded him of the treasure he had so fatally lost; if the tender, perfect, and still increasing attachment subsisting between her and his Orlando taught fond regret to paint with agonising touches the short moments of his own wedded happiness, Religion's potent power would restore to him the calm influence of resignation, and teach him to look, with pious faith and hope, for a re-union with his Viola in the realms of never-fading bliss.

The good and faithful father Rinaldo, at the request of the noble Lorenzo, gave up his situation in the monastery of St. Lewis, and re-assumed his station of domestic chaplain at Manfredonia; where he was loved by all, and his virtues justly appreciated. The

duca had sufficient interest to obtain for him the highest church preferment; but the unambitious, affectionate old man rejected all honours, and, preferring the circle of domestic comfort, chose to live with his patron and his friend, and to pass the remainder of his days in the family of Manfredonia.

The pious and learned father Alberti became the domestic chaplain at the castle of Palino; and, refusing too all episcopal honours, dedicated the rest of his life to witnessing the perfect happiness of his beloved Alphonso, and to giving his children that instructionfrom which their amiable father had derived such advantage, and to which he had done such honour, before them.

The monks of St. Lewis were most liberally recompensed by the munificent Lorenzo for the part they had taken in the restoration of himself and children to the world and their ancient honours. But the general reward was not deemed by him or his children a sufficient testimony of their gratitude for the services of the incorruptible and skilful Pierre: they therefore who

shortly procured him to be invested with episcopal dignities; nor ceased their exertions in his favour until they placed him in that situation which Rinaldo and Alberti had rejected: and in his eminent station as cardinal, this once obscure man did honour, by his humility and manifold virtues, to human nature and the friends who exalted him.

Nor were the sisters of St. Marguerite's forgotten by our heroine. Her grateful heart led her to reward all who had been kind to her in her misfortunes; and the liberal presents she made to the abbess and the Benedictine sisters plainly evinced how highly she estimated her obligations to them.

Signora Ursuline, as our reader can readily suppose, passed the winter of her days in the family of her beloved Victoria, receiving from every individual that respect and tender regard she so well merited, and deriving happiness from witnessing the augmenting felicity of her darling pupil, whom with pleasure she assisted in the task of rearing her children, and in educating the young Viola and Clementina. Nor were the re-

lations of Farinelli forgotten by Victoria, her adoring husband, or affectionate father; and the obligations our heroine was under to that incomparable woman were repaid by amply providing for all those she held most dear.

To Octavia Bernini was left no cause to regret her eventful expedition into Spain. Her virtues and services were rewarded, and the families of Manfredonia and Ariosto left it no longer in the power of necessity to tear her from the bosom of her family in quest of their advantage.

For the fate of poor old Teresa we trust, compassionate reader, you feel interested. Before Orlando finally quitted the Pyrenean castle, he offered to Teresa her choice of accompanying him to Italy and residing there for life in his family, or returning to her relations and native village with a handsome annuity. This kindly-intended proposition almost rent the heart-strings of poor Teresa. Affection strongly called her into Italy with her adored child and his beloved lady, while duty peremptorily commanded her return to Arragon to her husband and her children. She consulted Vic-

toria upon this delicate affair, who advised her at least visiting the place of her nativity, to learn whom Time had spared to her; to relieve the necessities of her kindred; to arrange for their future comforts; and then to remain with them, or not, exactly which she should find most congenial to her feelings.

Teresa wept for joy at advice so correspondent to her wishes: here was a salvo for her conscience; and, resolving to play the jesuit with her mental admonisher, she considered that duty could demand no more than visiting and relieving the wants of her relations, and then no bosom-monitor could sting her with reproach for following the impulse of inclination.

The affectionate and grateful Orlando, attentive to the comfort and safety of his good old nurse, appointed Thomas, with a secure escort, to accompany Teresa to her native village; where she went fully determined not to like any one person or circumstance there which might impede her earnest wish of spending the short period of her existence in the family of Orlando and Victoria. But,

alas! poor Teresa had no occasion to take such pains in forming resolutions. Nineteen years make melancholy alterations in this transitory world! The husband of Teresa, her daughter, and grand-children, all were laid in the peaceful grave; her son-in-law wedded again, with a new family around him: all her own kindred, all the friends who had cared about her, gone.

The feeling-hearted Teresa wept the bitter tears of anguish at this intelligence, although, as she journeyed from Catalonia, she fancied such information would give her pleasure. The ignorant few among the old who recognised her declared she was a spectre thrown up from the grave; the young, as ignorant, believed she was a witch. One party shunned her, the other maltreated her; while Thomas (whom all united in thinking crazy) got into a variety of ridiculous and dangerous scrapes upon her account, and with much difficulty effected their safe retreat from a village which he execrated with all his might and main, and with all possible care conducted Teresa to the castle of Manfredonia, where she was

received with a sincere and affectionate welcome, that recompensed the poor afflicted old woman for all the grief, peril and toils she had experienced in her visit to her native plains.

In the castle of Manfredonia Teresa found herself a woman of wonderful consequence among the domestics; for, having taken care of their young lord in his childhood, she plumed herself much upon the importance that circumstance gave her; prattling for hours each day of how she reared him, recounting the prodigies of his early days, relating all the horrors of the Pyrenean castle, and expatiating upon all Victoria's sufferings and virtues, which she had experienced and manifested there; while the greatest happiness of her life she derived from the kindness of Orlando and Victoria, in allowing her to make a bustle in the nursery, and to fancy herself of infinite service to the lovely young brood there.

One of the incidents highly affecting to the susceptible feelings of Lorenzo, upon his return to the castle of his ancestors, we will add a page or two to these volumes by

relating. We trust our reader has not forgotten Fidato—the old and faithful maggiordomo, whom the indignity offered to his lamented lord, by the marriage of Elvira, had driven to his bed in a nervous fever. Grief, horror, old age, and cruel treatment from the usurper, brought upon this hitherto healthy man a complication of maladies: and, about six years prior to Lorenzo's return to Manfredonia, the wretched Fidato, in a miserable state of mental and bodily debility, was despoiled of all the honest earnings of his life by the rapacious Polydore, and driven by that ruthless barbarian from the castle to a miserable hut upon the sea-shore, where for the last two years he had been totally confined to his bed—where, but for the humanity of the oppressed and impoverished peasant where he lodged (and who still remembered Fidato's kindness to him in happier times), he must have perished for want of care.

A short time prior to Lorenzo's return, by the pitying decrees of Almighty Providence, the mental powers of this poor persecuted suffering old man revisited him. At

length the duca di Manfredonia was restored to redress the grievances of his ruined and persecuted tenantry. Fidato, with every pulse throbbing with ecstatic joy and gratitude to heaven, heard the wondrous tale: it renovated his expiring lamp of life; it gave to his enfeebled reason a gleam of energy long unknown to it. Lorenzo visited the bedside of this esteemed and faithful old domestic, wept over his injuries, his ailments, his afflictions, and had him instantly removed in a litter, with the tenderest care, from the hovel to the castle.

In the hall Fidato was received and welcomed by his kind and long-lost master. Again Fidato hid his hoary head in the bosom of Lorenzo, and wept for joy. He saw his young lord once more, and pressed his hands to his throbbing heart; beheld the lady Matilda, and the destined wife of the long-lamented marchese di Palermo—she who had been permitted by Heaven to restore his ancient master to him. He gazed upon her with rapturous gratitude and delight; he sobbed; he pressed her hand with respectful affection to his lips, and blessed her with

affecting solemnity. He was then gently conveyed to the chamber which for thirty years he had inhabited; where, looking around with a cheerful and delighted countenance, he piously thanked Heaven for extending his life to behold once more his beloved injured lord and his lovely children; to hear the vilely traduced fame of his inestimable lady restored to its rank amongst the immaculate; and to permit him to breathe his last sigh in the service and castle of his lord: and, then blessing Lorenzo and his children with fervor, he, with a sweet smile of tranquillity, laid his head upon his pillow, and without a sigh or struggle sunk into eternal sleep.

CHAP. XXII.

By the time Diego was restored to honorable society both his parents were no more; but ever cherishing the hope of his being yet in existence, they had left all their property in the hands of trustees, to accumulate for his use, should he appear in the space of twenty-one years after their decease. That term was not half expired. The late conte Ariosto too left a noble legacy for his ever-lamented favourite, bearing interest, and to remain appropriated for his use for fourteen years, when, should Diego not have been heard of, the money was to become the property of Alphonso. More than that term had elapsed since the death of Altidore; but the amiable Alphonso, in respect to his father's attachment, and in gratitude for Diego's kindness and services to Victoria, presented him his legacy, with all its accumulation, even unto the very day he was put into pos-

session of it. But although the property of Diego thus lay in Tuscany, although his attachment to the castle of Palino was unsubdued, and his respect for the present conte Ariosto extreme, he still preferred a residence at Manfredonia. To be near Orlando and Victoria was the first wish of his heart; to see them daily, to sometimes converse with them, was a pleasure he would not forego for any other temporal consideration; and as his active mind was ever reverting to dreadful subjects when devoid of employment, the good duca, in recompense for his services, and to draw him from the torturing retrospection brought on by inaction, appointed him maggiordomo as soon as the men of business employed for the occasion had arranged all the embarrassments of the estates and tenantry.

Diego, affluent and independent, settled in a family where all his attachments centred, with an honourable employment that occupied most of his time, and gave ample opportunities to his active benevolence to exercise itself, was yet unhappy. His feeling mind still shuddered at the crimes he had

been led into the commission of, and each moment of inaction his pensive agonised thoughts fled back to scenes of past horror, embittering his else now cloudless days, and strewing his pillow with the rankling thorns of despondence and contrition.

Orlando and Victoria were often the confidants of his miserable feelings; their good sense and pity strove to reason and persuade him back to happiness, while their piety dropped all the balm into his wounds that Omnipotent mercy promises to the lowly contrite penitent. At length the restless Diego conceived it highly reprehensible for such a sinner as he had been to remain in the world exposed to temptations he had so fully evinced himself unable to resist; and that the only prospect he had of salvation was by renouncing the world, and in the gloomy recesses of a cloister strive, by unceasing prayer and penance, to expiate his crimes.

This measure Orlando and Victoria strongly opposed, being both firmly of opinion that the active benevolent Diego would only find misery in a convent, while in the world, as

a husband, a father, philanthropist, by avoiding sin in the midst of temptation, leading others to virtue by his example, and by his benevolence and kindness making numbers happy, he could more fully perform his duty to Heaven, and more amply make atonement for the offences of his past life. But, not choosing that their judgment alone should decide in such an important affair, they persuaded Diego to lay all his thoughts and perplexities before the holy fathers Rinaldo, Alberti, and Pierre, and to abide by their decision. The two latter were therefore immediately convened, and with Rinaldo, the duca di Manfredonia, Orlando and Diego, solemnly and deeply discussed the momentous question, when the opinions of all were strongly against Diego's project, and the holy men and Lorenzo perfectly agreed with Orlando in his ideas upon the subject; and so mild, so merciful was the theology of these good priests, so comforting their doctrines, that Diego's heart dilated with the cheering hope of Heaven's forgiveness, and his own firmness against temptation.

Orlando, well knowing the sensitive sen-

sibility of Diego's composition, would not leave time to the indulgence of his oppressed feelings, after the solemn scene was ended; but good-naturedly catching this inestimable though humble friend by the arm, led him to the marchesa, who was sitting in her dressing-room, striving to employ herself in reading, while all her thoughts were fixed upon the interesting conference in the library. Ursuline and Roselia were both with her: but as the ingenuous Diego had never affected secresy before them, neither of them now attempted to retire, as they were full of anxiety to learn what had been the decision of the monks. The ardent Victoria instantly caught intelligence from the eyes of her husband, and starting from her seat took the hand of Diego, and sweetly said with all the spirited glow of animation which unfeigned pleasure gives—

"Orlando's countenance tells me that our united wish is realised, and that society is not to lose a valuable member."

Diego burst into tears, and covering his face with both hands, would have retreated, only for the active attention of Orlando, who

grasping him by the arm, spoke with an air of gaiety calculated to inspire cheerfulness:

"I have brought Diego hither, Victoria, to be tried and condemned, without benefit of clergy, for high treason against your sex. As we came from the solemn congress hither, I advised him, if he wished for complete happiness, to get a wife; and, would you believe it, I am convinced not even your persuasions could win him to compliances; he seems to shrink from matrimony as from some most horrible institution."

"Oh! the insulting savage!" exclaimed signora Farinelli. "Were I a marrying woman, I declare I would set my cap in the most resistless manner at him, and, by winning him, secure our revenge."

"And reward my humility, you mean, signora," said Diego, who by this time had made a successful effort to suppress his feelings. "My good lord has a little misconceived me. Living in the castle of Manfredonia, who could shrink from wedded life? My lord advised my uniting myself to some amiable woman whom I loved, and—"

" And strongly I advise it, Diego, from conviction. You talk of being easily led to error. United to such a woman as my Victoria, think you that I can ever stray? Must not I ever shrink from error, lest I should become unworthy of her affection?"

" With virtue by the hand, he must indeed be a prompt sinner who could stray. But, my lord, you know there is not a woman in existence equal to the marchesa di Palermo; and the only man who deserved such a gift from Heaven has obtained her. As for me, such are my pretensions to wedded happiness, that I dare not claim alliance with any virtue. How dare I, tainted as I am by crimes, ask the love of any estimable woman? How could I hope to be beloved, who—"

At this moment Roselia hastily quitted the room, with her fine countenance covered with the brightest tints of vermilion, and in a state of agitation that could no longer effect concealment.

A smile of intelligence beamed over the expressive countenance of Victoria, and bore conviction to her Orlando, on whose

face was instantly displayed its counterpart.

The humble Diego was not deficient in penetration:—he beheld the emotion and flight of Roselia, and saw the expressive smile of his lord and lady. Hope and joy explained all to his wishes; and, almost in as much perturbation as poor Roselia, he waited not for further conviction, but, closely pursuing her steps, at length overtook her ere she reached her intended retreat; when he hastened, though we fear rather aukwardly, to inform Roselia that he tenderly loved her, since his first knowledge of her virtues; since he beheld her resistless beauty through the touching charm of tears, awakened by affection and distress at the forlorn and persecuted situation of her beloved lady Victoria; since she evinced such humanity towards himself in the château of De Montfort.

Roselia heard him without any symptoms calculated to announce his case a hopeless one: and Victoria shortly after drew from the ingenuous Roselia a secret that she long suspected—that the interesting Diego, not-

withstanding his being sixteen years her senior in age, had stolen imperceptibly into her tenderest affections: and as Victoria firmly believed that in defiance of his former errors Diego was an honest man, who would make her beloved Roselia happy, readily gave her consent to the union.

By the earnest desire of Roselia, her old friend the good father Alberti performed the nuptial ceremony; and her beloved preceptress, the venerable and hoary-headed Ursuline, was her bridemaid. Conte di Ariosto gave her to the bridegroom; for both he and his Matilda attended at Manfredonia to evince their respect to Roselia and Diego. Victoria furnished the bride's wardrobe; and assisted herself on the nuptial day to decorate the person of her beloved Roselia, whom she feelingly reminded of having done the same for her, but under very different auspices; yet fervently she hoped Roselia's road to happiness would prove as certain.

The generous friends of Roselia, Alphonso and Victoria, presented her with a handsome marriage-portion, which Diego

settled upon her and her children, as he did all the patrimony and legacy bequeathed to him. A very pretty house in the park, approximate to the castle, neatly furnished, was presented by Lorenzo to Diego for the residence of himself and wife. The duca, Orlando, Matilda, Ursuline, and Alberti, all evinced their friendship and good-will to Roselia by presenting her with gifts suited to the fortune of the donors; and this union, formed under such propitious auspices, proved as happy as their most zealous friends could wish. The life of Roselia glided on in undisturbed conjugal and domestic felicity; while her affectionate and indulgent Diego, as a husband and a father, as a faithful steward, a lenient master, the benefactor of the poor, the champion of the oppressed, the alleviator of sorrow, the pious Christian, the upright honest man, deserved the favour of Heaven, and obliterated from the minds even of the most fastidious, by his active virtues in his maturer years, all recollection of the transgressions of his former days.

Thomas, if he had the inclination, had

not the power of returning to his native country. Thomas had been an orphan, the offspring of an honest sailor who had been reared in the workhouse at Biddeford in Devonshire. When arrived at a proper age, he was bound apprentice to a fisherman, by whom he was treated with excessive kindness. When he became his own master, he gratified the first wish of his heart by enlisting in the royal navy; and during several cruizes, and in some celebrated engagements at sea, he signalised his courage and good conduct so much, that, young as he was, he was promoted to the post of boatswain. After seven years spent in the navy, with credit to himself and advantage to the profession, he was once more in England; and at the age of twenty-one obtained leave of absence from his ship to go and visit his old master at Biddeford, intending to make the good old man's latter days happy by a cargo of prize-money, which he had hoarded for his kind master's use.

On his arrival at Biddeford, he was shocked to find his master's only son (who

had been his fellow-apprentice), a good-natured thoughtless youth, who had ever been wild and easily led astray, had fallen under the penal law, and been executed for piracy. The unhappy father, though overwhelmed by the dreadful odium his son's misconduct had brought upon his closing life, was taught by affection to mingle with his bitter pangs a fond remembrance of all the good properties his ill-fated son's heart possessed; and, never having followed his occupation upon a Sunday from the moment of his son's execution, instead of attending at public worship (as he had on that day uniformly done), at dawn of morn he took his staff, and with his day's provision at his back, and accompanied by his faithful dog, he traced his faltering steps to the dreadful spot where the body of his child was exposed to public contumely; and at the foot of the gibbet, in sunshine and in rain, in keen frost and drifting snow, the agonised father kept his heart-rending sabbaths, until the closing hour of day forced his return to his now miserable home.

Poor Thomas was led by affection to his

old master to keep one of these direful vigils with him. The father's half-averted eye, in which the mingled tear of grief and humiliation trembled—the blush of shame that flushed his furrowed cheek—the agonising sigh that convulsed his bosom—were all too much for the susceptible feelings of Thomas, and he determined the wretched parent should never pass such another heart-rending watch.

Thomas went secretly to work. With some planks of oak he made a kind of coffin; cut down the body of his friend, and interred him in a lonely part of a sequestered church-yard in a neighbouring hamlet. The body was missed. Inquiry led discovery to poor Thomas, who was thrown into jail, and brought to trial; when the irritability of his feelings, and ignorance of the law, led him into the commission of contempt of court; and this, added to his other crime, required all the interest of poor Thomas's naval friends to have his sentence mitigated to fourteen years' transportation.

Thomas, indignant at a punishment his heart told him that he deserved not, quitted

England; and, as his native and much-loved Albion lessened to his view, he rashly made the most solemn and awful of vows never more to return. On his voyage to America the transport he was in was wrecked: many of the crew and convicts perished, while he with a few other individuals were saved from the fury of the storm by a Portuguese merchantman on its way from Mexico to Lisbon. As they approached the shore of Portugal, they fell in with and were taken by Achmet the corsair, from whose power our reader already knows he was taken by Don Manuel, in whose service he was fettered by links of compulsion which his natural honesty could not find out means to break. But even in the service of this predacious society he could never be prevailed upon to join in plundering a prize his valour had assisted to take: and on every possible occasion he failed not to evince the virtues of his heart; while he strove to reconcile himself to his fate by thinking, that as he could never more fight for his country he would not fight against it by enlisting in the navy of any other maritime power; and that, as

he must fight upon the sea to be happy, he might as well do it in Don Manuel's service as any other.

Emancipated from the power of Don Manuel, and settled amongst the vassals of Manfredonia, Thomas's heart whispered to him that he once again knew happiness; he could once again look stedfastly upon an honest man, and own without blushing who was his master.

To afford him employment, and contribute to his happiness, the good duca and Orlando gave to the care of Thomas all the fishing- and pleasure-boats, with all the armed vessels belonging to the duchy of Manfredonia; or when sailing upon the Adriatic, whether protecting the shore from the incursions of some predacious Turk, or proudly guiding the helm when the duca and his family took a marine excursion, poor Thomas felt himself little less than a British admiral.

Hugo, Orlando's faithful *camereiro*, and prompt agent for obtaining views of lady Victoria for him in the château de Vicenza, was summoned from Roussillon to Manfre-

donia upon Orlando's first arrival at the castle of his ancestors; and the happy Hugo re-instated in the service of his beloved master.

Pedro had been bound, by a solemn oath to Francisco, to return to the castle of the Pyrenees in the brigantine after leaving lady Victoria in a place of safety; but the implacable fury of the tempest had prevented his fulfilling that sacred engagement:—and as he had only sworn to return with the brigantine, and as the brigantine was irrecoverably lost, he believed himself absolved from his oath, and by no means bound to return (nor did he know the way) to a horde of villains, who had basely dragged him from happiness to misery and bondage; and the moment Providence permitted him to reach the rocks he made for he determined to return immediately to Murcia. Yet fearing the recognition of any of the predacious society, he hastened effectually to disguise himself; and by a fatiguing and fear-inspired circuit from Marseilles, where he landed, through Languedoc, Gascony,

across the Pyrenees into Navarre, and through Old and New Castile, at length reached Murcia; when making his rapid way to Carthagena, in a state of the most pitiable anxiety, he cautiously announced himself to an old priest, his family's confessor, when he had the singular happiness of hearing little to disturb his peace or affect his feelings but the unfeigned grief of his family on so mysteriously losing him. His Isabella was a real mourner, and her sorrow as poignant as upon the moment of his ambiguous disappearance being authenticated; and she would have retired to weep in the gloom of a cloister had not maternal duty bound her to the world, for Pedro had left her in the way that women wish to be who love their lords; and on his return to Carthagena he was hailed as father by a lovely boy.

The happy intelligence of her husband's return was cautiously communicated to Isabella by Pedro's now joyful brothers. But to describe Pedro's first interview with his wife, child, and other relations, baffles

our attempt at description, and we must leave them to our reader's own imagination to pourtray.

Pedro, restored to domestic happiness, forgot not the dreadful fate, which he believed inevitable, of his shipwrecked friends, or the mournful commission he had promised to execute. He tore himself from his now even more tenderly beloved Isabella; and, attended by an escort of his brothers, relations, and friends, who all feared his again falling into the power of the predacious society, he journeyed to Cadiz, where he supposed conte Ariosto was, when he had the rapture of hearing, from Alphonso's colonel, that lady Victoria was saved from the fury of the tempest, and then in Provence, whither conte Ariosto was gone to visit her.

Pedro, full of joy and gratitude to Heaven for the miraculous escape of himself and friends, returned to Carthagena; to where at length the courier of Orlando, entreating the presence of Pedro at Manfredonia, traced him. Pedro, full of amaze-

ment at the wonderful and happy discoveries the packet of Orlando contained, and no longer having the predacious society to fear, was hastening to obey his summons, when another express arrived to inform Pedro that the marchese and marchesa of Palermo were gone upon the already-mentioned tour. But upon Orlando and Victoria's return to Manfredonia, they sent to request a visit from Pedro, his wife and child; and this humane man, his Isabella and boy, cheerfully undertook this long voyage and journey, which they had never cause to repent. The kindness and attention of Lorenzo and his children gratified every feeling of their hearts; while the munificent friendship of the duca di Manfredonia, and the marchese and marchesa of Palermo, amply repaired the injury done to the fortune of Pedro by his long estrangement from his family, and sequestration from his practice as a surgeon.

The wounded mariners who found shelter in the monastery of St. Lewis, with all the crew of the brigantine, who had aided

in Orlando's and Victoria's escape from the Pyrenean castle, that the families of Manfredonia and Ariosto could trace out, were rewarded, and put into the way of earning an honest subsistence.

With infinite expense and difficulty the pious and grateful Lorenzo had the bones of the ill-fated and affectionate Bernardo traced to his unhallowed sepulchre in a wood near Alfidence, and with respectful solemnity conveyed to the family mausoleum of Manfredonia, where all that remained of this faithful domestic was laid at the foot of Viola's monument, where a plain marble tablet was erected over him; upon which was simply, though beautifully, recounted his attachment and fidelity to Viola, with the fatal termination of his life, while hasttening to clear her fame and restore her happiness.

The true Hippolyto, Orlando failed not to trace out and invite to Manfredonia, where that amiable young man spent much happy time with the friends he had known and loved in the Pyrenean castle; but upon

the death of his friend, the good *abate*, he found himself in possession of an ample fortune, with which he returned to his family; and after his long estrangement from them, was at length happily and respectably settled among his own connexions.

CHAP. XXIII.

ALTHOUGH the crimes of Francisco had been enormous, his virtues had also been great. He had been a faithful affectionate guardian to Orlando and Matilda, and reared them in the path of virtue—he had ever been kind and attentive to the supposed Sebastian, and had preserved Victoria from destruction. The families of Manfredonia and Ariosto were therefore bound to him by affection and gratitude; and although they condemned his offences, they strained every nerve to save him from the dangers that encompassed him.

The connexion of Francisco with the predaceous society had long been no secret to the Inquisition (whom he had dexterously bribed to forbearance), and had been some time suspected by the Observantine monks; but upon the annihilation of the predaceous brotherhood, and the razure of the castle, its communication with the cave

of the holy hermit could no longer be concealed from the multitude of Catalonia; and it required every exertion of the duca di Manfredonia and conte Ariosto to save Francisco from the fury of the people, from the cognisance of the church and law. But, though with difficulty, they did secure his safety, and placed him in a convent of Franciscan monks near to the castle of Manfredonia, where he was frequently indulged by the society of those he had been kind to in their misfortunes, and who in return had rescued him from destruction—and where, awed and affected by the confessions and penitence of his friend Elfridii, by the perils he had himself escaped, and the long uncertain fate of his beloved son—he lived a life of contrition, and died a sincere penitent.

For many years after the restoration of Lorenzo to the world, a melancholy friar, of the already-mentioned Franciscan monastery (and, though lately professed, one of the most exemplary amongst the brothers), had often been observed by the family of the castle to wander pensively round the

grounds, apparently anxious to escape notice; though never omitting to gaze with solemn marked attention upon Lorenzo, his children, and grandchildren, when he could do it unseen by them. Often was he known to stray into the castle chapel, and pass whole hours amongst the monuments erected to the family of Manfredonia. Still the melancholy father Julio shunned all conversation with every individual out of his convent, unless when without their parents he met the children of Orlando, whom he then would stop to caress, and to give them his solemn benediction.

At length, one morning the children met the melancholy father Julio. He seemed even unusually depressed; and his steps were faltering and uneven: yet, on sight of the children, a flush of energy seemed to renovate his drooping frame. He rushed forward to meet them: he blessed them all, but embraced the little Viola; and, as he pressed her with fervor to his heart, he threw a chain and cross of the most precious brilliants round her neck; bade her wear them as the gift of a man who loved her

family; and, giving her his solemn benediction, hastily retreated through a by-path in an adjoining wood.

The nurses hastened home with the children to give the jewels to the marchesa, and recount to her all that had occurred. Victoria, amazed and affected, summoned Orlando; who, participating in her feelings, hastened to the Franciscan monastery to demand an interview with father Julio; but that melancholy man was no where to be found. Orlando, in the impetuosity of his feelings, related the anecdote and showed the gems to Francisco, who instantly knew them; and his anticipating heart now conjectured what he had not before suspected. Julio was diligently searched for; but not until the succeeding morning was he discovered, when he was traced to the castle chapel, and, on the base of Viola's monument, was found by Diego extended a breathless corse! His body was removed to his convent, where beneath the cowl and sacerdotal habit appeared all that now remained of the once beautiful, brave—sometimes virtuous, but too often vicious—Ambrosio de

Montalvan; and in the convent church was he interred with every possible respect, attended by all the monks of his order, by the deeply-affected duca di Manfredonia and marchese di Palermo; the weeping Diego, and sorrowful Thomas: and he was mourned in death, as a man who had for the last few years of his existence evinced a conduct so exemplary that all around admired and wished to imitate it.

When Don Manuel fled from his castle, he took refuge in a neighbouring bay, where the confessions of Elfridii, and real fate of Viola, reached his knowledge. He attended the solemn ceremony in the castle church; and he it was who in the disguise of a monk evinced such sorrow, and had fled subdued from the pathos of Victoria's voice. From that moment all thoughts of Matilda, with every vice that had disgraced his heart, fled at once; and Viola, with every virtue, from that moment took possession of his bosom. The dreadful fate of that immaculate being, immolated by the dæmons of revenge beneath his own roof,

with the heart-rending scene of her death, now fastened upon his peace; and, as he strove to be what might lead him to where her pure spirit dwelt, undermined his health, and signed at length his final doom. From his own castle church he hastened to Naples, where he attended the procession that received the manes of Viola; and at Manfredonia he was present at her last sad interment.

Don Manuel now speedily entered the Franciscan monastery, and soon took the vows: he there saw his father, and was happy to find him so properly employed—but still concealed himself from his knowledge, wishing now to have no interruption to the solemn and sad subject of his thoughts. Soon he felt convinced of the rapid decline of his health: but he never complained, resolving not to indulge himself with that mitigation to suffering which medicine might afford. And the only comfort he would allow himself was the pleasure of sometimes viewing at a distance the adults of the now dear to him Manfredonia family;

and to look on, caress, and bless the children of Orlando and Victoria.

At length, he felt conviction that the moment of his dissolution was at hand; and at the hour he knew the children of the castle walked out with their attendants, he strayed from his convent with a hope of meeting them. His hope was gratified: and round the neck of the young Viola (in whom he traced a strong resemblance to that lovely being whose name she bore) he threw the only gems he possessed, which honour had bestowed upon him. They had been the gift of his sovereign upon one of the most glorious achievements of Don Ambrosio di Montalvan. Then, rushing from the children, he bent his way to the mausoleum, and breathed his last sigh, according to his wishes, upon the cold marble which covered the manes of her he never ceased to adore when living, and to lament in death.

This event gave the keenest affliction to the bosom of Francisco; but still he derived consolation from the soothing thought of

his son's repentance, and having finished his days in a manner likely to effect his eternal salvation.

When Polydore and Garcias fled from the castle of the Pyrenees, they steered their boat to the coast of France, and landed at Narbonne, from whence they immediately embarked for America. In that country, without money or friends, and making enemies by their still incorrigible turpitude, they experienced the most terrible vicissitudes and misfortunes, and at length fell in with a tribe of Indians, with whom they contrived to live on terms of amity. At last, a war broke out with a neighbouring nation. Garcias and Polydore were compelled to join the tribe with which they dwelt, and attack the enemy. Their tribe was conquered, and these diabolical wretches became prisoners to the conquerors; when they met with that dreadful punishment so long due to their monstrous crimes. Garcias and Polydore were sentenced to die, and death was inflicted, according to the custom of the barbarous tribe that con-

quered them, by tortures from which dismayed nature recoils—which we shrink from describing.

Alonzo, and the rest of the predaceous brotherhood who fled at the approach of the Inquisition, were scattered round the world, whither their fears precipitated them; and, taking up various modes to earn or seize subsistence, sooner or later met their rewards or punishments.

Hero, at the desire of her amiable indignant brother, was confined for life in a convent, "as the most effectual punishment,' he said, " that could be inflicted upon her for so basely disgracing the honest family from which she sprung."

The body of Elfridii was interred in the church of the Observantine monastery at Cadaques, where the mild forgiving friend whose happiness he had destroyed caused the most solemn masses to be said for the repose of this sincere penitent's soul, and appropriated a sum of money to de ray the expenses of the same awful ceremony being annually repeated.

Before Victoria finally quitted the Pyre-

nean castle, Francisco had caused the Inquisition to trace out the wretched Sanguinario, who was humanely removed to a place at Barcelona appropriated for the reception of those afflicted by the most direful of human calamities.

The unfortunate artificer of Geneva was liberated; and, with the other captives found in the prisons of the castle, received from the Inquisition a sum of money sufficient to convey them to their native homes.

We trust that we have now performed our part as faithful historians, and have left no circumstance untold that our readers can wish to be informed of. We fondly hope that our feeble efforts have contributed, in some degree, to the amusement of our readers, and that no heart has become less pure for having perused our pages.

THE END.

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